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Report of the Early Primary Education Project



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Ministry
of
Education

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REPORT OF THE
EARLY PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT

Submitted to:

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Deputy Minister of Education

MAY 1985

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	i
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.....	1
1.1 Origin of the Project.....	1
1.2 Objectives of the Project.....	2
1.3 Historical Background.....	4
2. PROCESS EMPLOYED BY THE PROJECT.....	8
3. CONSENSUS OF OPINION AMONG PROJECT PARTICIPANTS.....	13
3.1 The Community Forums.....	13
3.2 The Study Sessions.....	14
3.3 Letters and Briefs.....	15
4. THE PRESENT SITUATION.....	17
4.1 Current Developments.....	17
4.2 Findings of Studies of Early Compensatory Education.....	19
4.3 Strengths of the Ontario Education System.....	21
4.4 Some Problem Areas.....	23
5. CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE.....	24
6. CHILD, SCHOOL, AND CURRICULUM.....	29
6.1 Organization of the Primary Division.....	31
6.2 Leadership.....	35
6.3 Flexible Entry.....	36
6.4 Junior Kindergarten Programs.....	36
6.5 Kindergarten Programs.....	38
6.6 Curriculum Policy and Support Materials.....	39
6.7 Evaluation.....	40
6.8 Professional Development.....	41
7. TEACHER EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION.....	43
7.1 Ontario Teacher's Certificate Holders.....	43
7.2 Early Childhood Education Diploma Graduates....	47
7.3 Teacher Education Centres.....	50

8.	LINKING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY.....	52
8.1	Developing Partnerships in the Education of Children.....	52
8.2	Changed Perceptions of the Family and the Child.....	53
8.3	Implications of Social Changes for Children's Education.....	55
8.4	New Roles for School Boards.....	56
8.5	Interministerial Cooperation.....	57
8.6	Family Resource Centres.....	60
8.7	Need for Parenting Skills.....	61
8.8	Flexibility in Children's Programs and Services, and Implications for Service Providers.....	62
8.9	Use of School Space for Services to Families with Young Children.....	63
8.10	Advisory Committees for Primary Education.....	63
9.	A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	66
10.	OTHER ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION.....	72
10.1	French Immersion Programs.....	72
10.2	Private Schools.....	72
10.3	Ministry of the Child.....	73
10.4	Delivery of Services to Remote and Rural Areas.....	73
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	74
	APPENDIXES	
A.	Program Expectations for the Primary Division..	77
B.	Examples of Successful Strategies for Linking Services.....	85
C.	The Advisory Committee.....	92
D.	The Steering Committee, Ministry Regional Coordinators, and Secretariat.....	95

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Early Primary Education Project was initiated to examine the education provided for children in the early years of the Ontario school system. Its goal was to propose new directions that the Ministry of Education and school boards might take in order to place renewed emphasis on these critical years.

The Project followed a broadly-based consultative approach, inviting expressions of opinion from a variety of people across the province. On the basis of input received through this process and through commissioned studies, the Project has made 42 recommendations. These deal with the child, school and curriculum; teacher education and certification; linking of community services to support families with young children; and implementation of the actions proposed.

In regard to curriculum, the central recommendations are that junior kindergarten (JK) be phased in throughout Ontario, and that the five years of the Primary Division (JK-Grade 3) be organized as an integrated unit. This unit would be characterized by continuity in both planning and program development, flexibility in pupil entry and progression, close attention to individual learning styles and developmental stages, and strong communication links with parents and others concerned with the education and well-being of young children. Consistent with its emphasis on an individualized approach, the Project recommends that "child learning profiles" be developed to identify the talents, interests, and needs of each pupil and suggest specific program adaptations.

A vital component of the Primary Division will be the level of specialized training of the teachers. To ensure that qualifications are maintained at a high level,

the Project makes several recommendations addressing minimum requirements, content of pre-service programs, opportunities for specialization, and establishment of bridging mechanisms between programs offered by teacher education institutions and colleges of applied arts and technology. To enhance pre-service and in-service teacher education, the Project recommends the creation of Teacher Education Centres (English and French) that will offer opportunities for cooperative research and development and supervised practical experience in school settings.

In view of social changes affecting families, the Project puts forward a number of recommendations designed to foster greater cooperation among institutions and agencies that serve families with young children. One of the key proposals is the establishment of family resource centres, in schools or elsewhere, that will provide a range of services responding to the particular needs of families and children in the local community.

Finally, the Project recommends an implementation plan that includes identification of pilot boards, establishment of a branch within the Ministry to support the aims of the Project, and appointment of enablers in Ministry regional offices to help school boards implement the changes approved.

The consensus of opinion among participants in the Early Primary Education Project was that implementation of its proposals would constitute the first phase of a renewal of elementary education in Ontario, a renewal that should be carried forward through the Junior Division and beyond.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This is the place to start, for that is where the children are. For only a hard look at the world in which they live - a world we adults have created for them in large part by default - can convince us of the urgency of their plight and the consequences of our inaction. Then perhaps it will come to pass that, in the words of Isaiah, "A little child shall lead them."

Urie Bronfenbrenner,
Two Worlds of Childhood

1.1 Origin of the Project

During the past five years, several reviews, reports and research studies of early childhood education in Ontario have identified a variety of issues requiring attention and action. These include the quality of education offered to young children in the early years of the Primary Division (junior kindergarten through grade 3); continuity in program development and planning throughout the Primary Division, and between it and the Junior Division (grades 4-6); differences in training, qualifications and certification of professionals working in early childhood education; the need for greater public understanding and appreciation of the purposes and benefits of early primary education; the increasing demand for a broader range of programs and services for young children, and the consequent need for more effective communication, coordination and planning among the institutions, organizations and government agencies which provide support services for families and young children.

In an effort to resolve these issues, the Ministry of Education initiated the Early Primary Education Project in January 1984. The task assigned to the Project, in the words of Dr. H.K. Fisher, then Deputy Minister of Education for Ontario, was "to provide new direction for the Province's education system, focussing on the early years...

to enable us to place greater emphasis in this critical area." A Project Secretariat headed by Ms. Frances Poleschuk was established, an Advisory Committee was appointed, and work commenced.

1.2 Objectives of the Project

The Project was designed to meet the following objectives, prepared by the Secretariat and approved by the Minister of Education and the Advisory Committee:

- to clarify the purposes and benefits of early primary education for parents, educational administrators, school board trustees, and the public in order to facilitate informed decisions about the provision of programs and services for young children
- to recommend policies and priorities in early primary education and to develop materials and strategies to assist school boards to develop and maintain high-quality programs for young children
- to maintain close liaison with those responsible for curriculum planning and development in the Primary and Junior Divisions in order to ensure program continuity
- in cooperation with teacher education institutions and colleges of applied arts and technology, to develop strategies for establishing "centres of specialization" in early primary education (English and French) and to examine the relationships between the programs and qualifications in early childhood education obtainable at the

colleges and those at the faculties of education.

- to devise ways to ensure that all available resources (provincial, regional, and local) are identified, coordinated and efficiently applied to assist families and young children.

For purposes of its inquiry, the Project considered "early primary education" as including junior kindergarten, kindergarten, and Grade 1. Throughout the report, these are also referred to as the "early years of the Primary Division." As defined by the Education Act, 1980, this Division comprises junior kindergarten, kindergarten, and the first three years of the program of studies immediately following them. The Project did not deal with the needs of children of pre-kindergarten age, since the mandate of the Ministry of Education does not include responsibility for daycare.

Rather than form its own definitions of the purposes and benefits of early primary education, the Project team deliberately chose to follow a process of extensive consultation with parents, educators, and community leaders in order to solicit their views. This process is central to the Project's approach to its task and to the cooperative structures it hopes will evolve from its proposals, and is therefore described in detail later in the report.

The recommendations of the Project were to build on the strengths of the present system, recognize and support the family as the prime force in the education of young children, support the Ministry of Education and school boards as they pursue the goals of equality of opportunity and the provision of high-quality education for all learners and provide the flexibility and scope necessary to accommodate the diverse needs of a changing Ontario

population. Finally, as reflected in the process selected, the recommendations were to be developed in consultation with the various partners, both within and beyond the educational community, who share responsibility for young children.

The following section provides a brief outline of developments in early childhood education in Ontario during the past decade. This outline is intended to help readers see the present report and its recommendations in context.

1.3 Historical Background

In 1968, Living and Learning, the report of the Hall-Dennis Commission, made the following statement:

Education in the future will require a greater public involvement, a greater partnership between the home and school, between the community and the school. The school cannot be indifferent to the social conditions of the area it serves. It cannot wait until the child arrives at age six... (p.14)

The future of which Living and Learning spoke is now, and the changes in education it foresaw are required now. Some of the changes have of course been made; in Ontario, schools do not wait until "the child arrives at age six." As a result of increased demand for early primary programs, the number of children enrolled in the kindergarten years has grown steadily. In 1984 there were 55,434 four-year-olds and 116,063 five-year-olds enrolled in kindergartens in Ontario schools (School September Reports, 1984). The figure for four-years-olds was the highest recorded up to that year. Other changes, however, have been slower to occur. The partnerships advocated between home and school and between community and school have followed a course of development perhaps best described as uneven and sporadic. One of the central aims of this Project has therefore been to propose ways whereby these potentially enriching partnerships can be fostered.

An equally important purpose of the project is to reaffirm the philosophy that formed the basis of the Ministry of Education curriculum documents issued in 1975, The Formative Years and Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions. Briefly stated, that philosophy emphasized the need to adapt programs to the abilities and talents of individual children, and underlined the importance of recognizing individuality in learning styles, of ensuring that each child develop self-confidence through the experience of success, and of promoting natural ways of learning -- through play, for instance. These documents also sought to strengthen continuity in program planning across both Divisions.

In 1977, the four Ontario teachers' federations whose members teach in elementary schools jointly sponsored the Commission of Inquiry into the Education of the Young Child. The study, conducted by Laurier LaPierre, was published in 1980 under the title, To Herald a Child. Its comments and recommendations strongly reinforced the importance of the early years and urged that increased attention and resources be directed to educational endeavours at that level. The study found that in some areas approaches to learning supported by Ministry curriculum documents did not appear well understood. On the matter of learning through play, for example, the report quoted the following excerpt from Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions:

Play is an essential part of learning. It is free from the restrictions of reality, external evaluations, and judgement. Children can try out different styles of action and communication without being required to make premature decisions or being penalized for errors. Play provides a context in which the teacher can observe children's handling of materials and social situations, assess their stage of development, and encourage experiences that further their growth.

The Commission noted, however, that its research findings indicated there was no consistency in the application of these principles (p.25).

Along with the publication of To Herald a Child, the observance in 1979 of The International Year of the Child served as a stimulus for looking more closely at the opportunities for growth and development our society was providing for its children. In the spring of 1982 a Ministry of Education task force studied a sample of Ontario schools in order to analyse how they planned and implemented programs in junior kindergarten, kindergarten, and Grade 1. The review found what it called "pockets of excellence" throughout the province, but also uncovered a number of problems (Ministry of Education, 1983). These included a discrepancy between the philosophies and practices that prevailed in the kindergarten years and those followed in Grade 1, a lack of organized, cooperative planning by teachers, and a dearth of in-service programs. In addition, staff redundancies were resulting in highly qualified early childhood teachers being displaced by teachers with greater seniority but fewer qualifications.

Finally, in its examination of preschool activities, the review found that community services for children were often limited and generally poorly coordinated. Most people interviewed saw the need for a community agency to coordinate care, recreation, and education programs around the clock; some suggested that schools could become family centres offering support services to families and children.

The Provincial Review (1982) indicated that in many jurisdictions junior kindergarten and kindergarten classes still remained outside the mainstream of education, thus impeding program continuity. Teachers, school administrators, trustees and parents often held widely different views of the purpose and expectations of kindergarten programs. In particular, some people appeared

to view junior kindergarten as a child-care service and an opportunity to socialize, while others saw it as a way of improving academic performance in subsequent years.

On the positive side, the report noted that the reviewers found it a pleasure "to observe competent committed educators who are providing happy, stimulating learning environments for young children" (p.2). Schools and classrooms that create such environments should be identified, and then publicized in such a way that others will seek to emulate them.

Subsequent discussions of the review with school board officials, principals, teachers, consultants, parents, professional organizations and the public confirmed the validity of the concerns it expressed. These discussions kindled an interest on the part of the educational community to work towards improving the quality of programs offered to children in the early years of the Primary Division, and led eventually to the initiation of the Early Primary Education Project.

2. PROCESS EMPLOYED BY THE PROJECT

From the very outset, the Project team recognized that the quality of education in the broadest sense depended on many factors lying outside the orbit of the school. It also sensed that attainment of its objectives would require the formation of new, more genuine partnerships among those who work with young children. The Project's search for new directions for the early years of the Ontario education system therefore took the form of "grass-roots" consultation designed to include representatives of all who share responsibility for young children - the family, school, and community. Numerous meetings, study sessions, and forums were held across the province in an attempt not only to gather ideas and opinions but also to initiate the kinds of partnerships the Project foresaw as necessary. The process employed by the Early Primary Education Project therefore served as a model for the kinds of "partnerships in education" it hoped would ensue. Just as the Project team members listened to what people said and considered their ideas seriously, the partnerships it seeks to foster will require schools to reach out to families and the community and establish a common cause in the education of young children.

The Project Secretariat included the Director and four Ministry education officers, all of them experienced in primary education and two with experience in French-language schools. The secretariat was aided in its work by eight additional education officers, and by a forty-five member Advisory Committee representing educational associations, faculties of education, community colleges, and other provincial government ministries. The Advisory Committee met three times during the course of the Project to identify key issues, offer proposals for action, and comment on the draft report and recommendations. Four work groups, chaired by Project staff and composed chiefly of Advisory Committee members, met from time to time to focus on the key issues of

the Project: program, teacher education, coordination and linking of resources, and implementation and public awareness. The work groups developed recommendations and supporting materials for the consideration of the Advisory Committee.

To solicit ideas and opinions from people across the province, the Project sent a letter to all directors of education, elementary and secondary school principals, consultants and teachers in the Primary Division, and - through the schools - to parents of children in junior kindergarten through Grade 3. The letter introduced the Project, identified its key issues, and invited expressions of opinion. Some seven hundred briefs and letters were received in response to the letter, to information circulated by school boards, faculties of education, and community colleges, and to a special edition of the Ministry's regular newsletter, Education Ontario, distributed in October, 1984.

Perhaps the most significant channels of communication between the public and the Project, however, were the community forums and study sessions. The forums, conducted in the Fall of 1984, were two-day invitational meetings attended by representative groups of about thirty people involved in the provision of services to families and children. Six forums were held in English - in Thunder Bay, London, North Bay, Kingston, Toronto, and Ottawa - and two in French, in Ottawa and Sudbury. The forums provided opportunities to explore societal values with respect to young children, to discuss the services currently provided for them, and to submit recommendations to the Project.

The study sessions were half-day, whole-day, or evening events arranged by regional coordinating committees of the Project. Participants included representatives of community service clubs and groups, administrators, principals, coordinators and consultants, teachers, parents, caregivers, staff members of faculties of education and

community colleges, and members of the public. To obtain a representative sample of principals and teachers, the Project arranged for those attending the sessions to be selected at random; each teacher was then asked to bring along a parent (thus initiating a partnership). Attendance at the sessions ranged from fifty to a hundred and fifty persons. A total of eighty-three sessions, forty-three in English and forty in French, were held across Ontario, giving people in all six Ministry of Education regions a chance to discuss early primary education and submit proposals. A discussion guide was prepared to assist in organizing debate on the issues and facilitating analysis of the results. Finally, in response to requests, members of the secretariat made numerous presentations to faculties of education, school boards, and educational organizations. In all, well over seven thousand persons participated in the deliberations of the Project.

In addition to this intensive province-wide consultation, the Project commissioned four research studies. In one, Dr. Ellen Regan of O.I.S.E. conducted case studies of selected preprimary centres in Ontario. Dr. Kenneth O'Bryan searched the literature on in-service teacher education to find out the best forms to employ for early primary education. In the third study, Judith Major visited a number of "family resource centres" established in many places across Ontario, and prepared a report describing each one in detail and identifying its salient factors. Finally, Dr. Isobel Doxey of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute undertook a study of four types of daycare centres. In addition, the secretariat travelled to Ypsilanti, Michigan, to discuss the findings of the High/Scope research studies of compensatory education with Dr. David Weikart, the principal investigator.

The Project's consultative process gave the partners in this enterprise the opportunity, often for the first time, to appreciate the wealth of resources available to families and young children and the importance of

cooperative planning to ensure that they are effectively applied. Not only did this data-gathering exercise provide a foundation for the Project's recommendations but it also helped draw together groups of committed educators and advocates of young children.

The consensus of participants in the forums and study sessions was that this consultative process should be continued so that all educators of young children can share responsibility in mutually supportive ways. The planning and creativity reflected in the sessions were perceived as an important societal resource, to be used for future initiatives taken on behalf of families and young children.

This valuable resource pool includes:

- parents who participate in the education of their children in a variety of ways. Their letters, telephone calls and briefs reflected a sensitive and keen understanding of young children and a sincere desire to work in cooperation with the school and community to provide high quality support services and education;
- the administrators, coordinators, consultants, teachers, early childhood and other educators who have supported one another in creating "child-sensitive" environments for children in schools and centres throughout the province;
- community workers and leaders in all professions and socio-cultural groups who give generously of their time to share their expertise and skills on behalf of families and children;
- students in cooperative education programs and family studies, teachers in training, and students in early childhood courses who capably

demonstrated their understanding of young children and the parenting skills they had gained;

- senior citizens who assist teachers in the classroom by reading stories to children or sharing their talents and skills in the arts, and other cultural activities;
- school boards which have recognized that child-centred learning can best occur when parents, teachers and the community are involved as partners and have developed policies and procedures ensuring cooperation and facilitating use of school facilities and space.

3. CONSENSUS OF OPINION AMONG PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

3.1 The Community Forums

The summary of the six English-language forums reflected several common concerns. First, the need was expressed for a vigorous campaign to inform the public about matters affecting young children and about the range of services offered by community agencies. A second, associated concern was the fragmentation of services to families and children and the resultant confusion. Whatever reorganization is undertaken, the groups felt it should provide children with universal access to preschool alternatives. Third, all the forums stressed the pressing need for improved teacher training, both pre-service and in-service. It was agreed that while much is known about child development, too little is effectively disseminated throughout the child-care community, with the result that experienced teachers are sometimes poorly informed about recent research findings. Finally, many forum participants believed there was an imperative need for the government of Ontario to make a public declaration of commitment to the education of young children, supported by a budget allocation.

Participants in the two French-language community forums expressed similar concerns. They strongly recommended a public awareness campaign, greater involvement of parents in the school's efforts to improve curriculum, increased collaboration among the agencies and ministries involved with young children, and a strengthening of preparatory programs for both prospective and current teachers in the Primary Division -- to the point of making specialized training mandatory. Other areas of concern were the specifics of high-quality early primary programs, the adequacy of materials and space provided for them, and the acquisition and maintenance of the French language in its unique minority setting.

3.2 The Study Sessions

Of the number of themes that recurred throughout the study sessions, two in particular deserve mention. The first is public recognition of the value of carefully designed primary education to a healthy, creative and productive society. People must be persuaded of the importance to everyone of an education that recognizes the needs of today's young children, promotes their talents, supports their families, and prepares them to be parents themselves. The second theme is the relative ineffectiveness of schools when they become isolated from home and community. These themes were evident as well in the forums and, indeed, in virtually all the individual and group submissions to the Project.

Not unexpectedly, many of the proposals and concerns arising from the sessions paralleled those of the forums. The Ministry of Education was urged to design and mount a public awareness campaign to illustrate the benefits of good early childhood education. Teacher education programs should be restructured and expanded to prepare teachers more adequately for the special challenges of instructing young children. Suggestions were made for a lengthy practicum, an internship of six months to a year, the introduction of a specialist certificate program in early primary education, and the need for constant updating and retraining. The use by school boards of community liaison officers was recommended in order to identify community needs, establish priorities, and help schools, boards, and community agencies provide the services required.

On the issue of linking resources, it was recommended that Parent/Family Resource Centres be established, in schools or other community buildings, as pilot projects to facilitate communication and coordination among Government ministries and various provincial and local agencies concerned with families and children. A related

proposal was to house more day-care and child centres in secondary schools and use them to provide the practical component of Family Studies courses.

The study sessions proposed a number of interesting changes to the way primary-age schooling is organized. One was that elementary schools establish a community-oriented integrated primary unit accommodating pupils from the ages of 3+ to 8. This unit, which now comprises JK to Grade 3, would be ungraded; be flexible in terms of entry, attendance, and -- for the younger children -- length of day; and offer a range of programs and services through diversity in staffing. Leadership for the unit would be provided by a primary department head or associate principal (at the school or family-of-schools level), who would deal with curriculum planning, professional development of teachers in the unit, parental involvement in decision-making, and community relations.

3.3 Letters and Briefs

The briefs from educational associations and school boards and letters from individuals were systematically analysed under several headings. Although no attempt was made to quantify this material, it was possible to discern commonalities in the responses and thus draw certain conclusions. Most of the comments received displayed a high measure of consistency in their approach to the issues.

In terms of the nature of early primary education, the respondents generally felt it should be child-centred, based on developmental theory, and relevant to children's experience. It should challenge the child in a wide variety of ways, emphasize play and creativity, permit children to interact with the environment, use the community as a resource, and emphasize process rather than mastery of content. A thematic approach transcending subject areas

should be adopted in order to foster an integrated view of the world. Children should be able to develop at their own pace and achieve enough success to acquire a good self-image.

Many who wrote to the Project said there should be more continuity in program. The transition from kindergarten to Grade 1, for example, should be more gradual, permitting children to move naturally. A child-centred approach program should be maintained throughout the Primary Division. Strong support was expressed for universal access to kindergarten, including junior kindergarten, and for variation in starting dates.

In terms of government action, people wanted the Ministry of Education to demonstrate publicly that it views early primary education as a foremost priority. A philosophical statement, policies, and guidelines should be developed for school boards, and the grant system restructured to equalize funding between elementary and secondary schools. The Ministry should issue a policy statement on class size. More coordination is required between different levels of government, among provincial government ministries, and among school boards.

Opinion on teacher education was unequivocal -- teachers of young children should be special persons, and not just in terms of formal qualifications. Respondents believed that teachers in the early years should hold a Primary Specialist Certificate, be knowledgeable about child development, learning theory, and developmental psychology, and really enjoy teaching young children and treat them as individuals. Early primary education, some people felt, should be an area of specialization. In-service programs of numerous kinds were needed for principals and school administrators as well as for teachers. "Lighthouse" or demonstration classes or schools should be considered.

4. THE PRESENT SITUATION

4.1 Current Developments

The concurrence of rapid social change, promising results in early compensatory education, and emergence of new knowledge about holistic learning and child development suggests that the time is opportune for the introduction of changes in our approach to early childhood education. Social change has created problems for families and their children that the schools are expected to help solve. Research into compensatory early education has conclusively demonstrated the efficacy of preventive measures. Studies have shown that the period from ages 3 to 8 is of pivotal importance to the intellectual and social growth of children and to their subsequent development (Schweinhart and Weikart, 1980). Educators are now more aware of the crucial importance of children's early years and of the variety of challenges that face families, obstructing both the development of children's ability to learn and their capacity to manage in today's increasingly complex world. As the Early Primary Education Project team undertook its task, its members agreed on the necessity to take a hard and honest look at the world we have created for young children and to attempt to compensate for its shortcomings. While building on the strengths of Ontario's present educational system, the Project sought at the same time to determine whether our schools have fully understood and responded to the wide-ranging socio-cultural changes that continue to exert a strong impact on the lives of families.

These changes have been amply documented (Ministry of Education, 1984): Several factors have combined to weaken the stability of the family and alter the former patterns of extended family and community support. Isolated from their traditional support systems, parents have been forced to seek help through more formal channels in order to ensure that their children receive the socializing and

educational experiences they need for healthy development. Responsibility for the care and education of young children is therefore being increasingly shared among parents, daycare providers, nursery schools, and the publicly supported elementary schools. Changes in the conventional model of the family and in patterns of child care are discussed in more detail in section 8 of this report, which deals with the linking of resources of schools and community agencies responsible for children.

Social change has therefore necessitated alterations in our patterns of nurturing and educating children. Under the right circumstances, these alterations can be beneficial to both parents and children. Well-designed and supervised programs are offered today in a variety of settings, including co-operative family centres, nursery schools, licensed day care centres, and kindergartens. Good as many of these programs are, however, we are increasingly recognizing the crucial importance of the family to the child's development. Rather than displace the family as the prime educational influence, the school is in a position to support it. The school can do this in many ways, for example, through strongly encouraging parents' participation in decisions about the child's education and through working closely with other community agencies that provide support services to families.

Along with responding to the imperatives of rapid and pervasive social change, educators must take into account the accumulating evidence of the remarkable learning capacity of young minds. Although educational psychologists differ on which of the child's early years are most important to learning, evidence is building up that carefully designed and administered cognitive stimulation early in life can make substantial differences not only to children's intelligence but also to the strengthening of their self-confidence and social competence. The European Ministers of Education, meeting in Lisbon in June 1981,

stated that the period from age 3 to 8 was decisive in a child's development:

It is the most active phase of their awakening to the world about them and to their culture. It is a stage of rapid learning about social behaviour and relationships. It is also generally the period during which children acquire the basic skills of linguistic communication and numeracy which are essential to a normal, fruitful existence in modern society. (van der Eyken, 1982).

Many authorities could be cited. For example, Rick Heber, an American researcher who has worked extensively on educational programs for disadvantaged families, has observed:

What most astounded us was the great possibilities all children have for intellectual growth. All of us who are concerned with this programme firmly believe that every child (and not just those who come from a disadvantaged milieu) is capable of learning much more than he learns today... Children are born with an immense capacity...

The following unedited text translated from French reveals the substance of Piaget's thinking, expressed in his many books:

What has always struck me the most, in my research with children, is the creativity they demonstrate during all of their development. This creativity is most evident in the baby who learns almost everything by its own actions; this creativity remains evident from 3-4 years until 11-12 years of age, and allows for a progression of thinking from one stage to another until the child reaches adolescence (Piaget 1976).

4.2 Findings of Studies of Early Compensatory Education

The evidence from studies of compensatory education is equally convincing. The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, in Ypsilanti, Michigan, has been

conducting research in early compensatory education for twenty years, monitoring two groups of students similar in all respects except that one experienced a high-quality education program in the years before Grade 1 and one group did not. The co-ordinator of the studies, Dr. David Weikart, presented his findings to the Early Primary Education Project in June 1984. He told the Project that children who received good early education had fewer learning difficulties, lower delinquency rates in later life, and much higher productivity, self-sufficiency, employability, and positive participation in economic life than those who did not. These gains lead to substantial economic benefits for the community. The High/Scope researchers have calculated that for every \$1,000 society invests in early primary programs of high quality, the return to society is \$7,000 -- through lower costs for education and legal processes (as a result of delinquency) and through increased lifetime earnings of program participants.

The High/Scope findings were recently confirmed by those of a study carried out with a much larger sample by researchers from the Institute for Developmental Studies at New York University's School of Education (Rohrer, 1985). From 1961 to 1970, 750 children took part in an early education enrichment program in New York City public schools, entering the program at age 4 and transferring to regular classes at the end of Grade 3. In 1981, the researchers traced some 400 of the study subjects, then aged 19 to 21, and interviewed 178 chosen at random. They found that the children who had participated in the program achieved markedly greater success rates in school and the job market as adults than children who did not take part in the program. In their preliminary report, the authors of the study commented: "Our findings support the notion that it is possible to make a significant difference in a youngster's life through early and sustained educational enrichment, and the resulting effects can be seen in a

number of dimensions related to the quality of life in later adulthood".

To sum up, social change has provoked a need for new forms of child care and education, and research has shown that these forms can assist all children, from privileged homes as well as from disadvantaged, to develop their abilities to the full. Moreover, research studies, confirmed over the years by the experiences of capable and innovative teachers, have greatly enlarged our estimate of the capacity of children to learn.

4.3 Strengths of the Ontario Education System

In applying new knowledge and insights to primary education, the Project naturally wished to build on what it perceived as the present strengths of the Ontario education system. As Issues and Directions observed, it is "from our present that we build a bridge to the future, a bridge that derives its strength and stability from the positive values of society" (p.3). In the case of early childhood education, the greatest strengths lie in the richness of the human resources available - in parents, in teachers and other educators concerned with young children, in community workers, and above all, in the children themselves.

Parents of today's young children are not passive consumers of educational services. They are frequently well informed about the importance of enriched experiences for young children's development and recognize the desirability of gaining a place for their children in school at the earliest opportunity. They are articulate in voicing their expectations of the school, and are willing to share their time and resources to assist teachers where they can. As one parent who participated in the Project said: "Schools need to take advantage of our skills, expertise and knowledge to ensure that the citizens of the future are the

best possible. Parents are a valuable resource - why are they not used?"

During the course of the Project, team members were encouraged by the number of primary teachers, consultants and co-ordinators, and early childhood educators who displayed a firm commitment to their task and to their own continued professional development. Through its consultative process, the Project team held discussions with many representatives of community agencies and groups working with children. It was impressed by the interest these people showed in education and by their recognition that they could play an important role in it to complement that of the schools. The secondary school students who are learning the basics of parenting through Family Studies courses and co-operative education programs constitute a growing and useful resource. Then there are the young children themselves, who in the words of parents, "have a huge capacity and eagerness to learn" and "have had a broad exposure to many learning experiences, such as T.V. and nursery schools." Both the findings of researchers and the insights of parents support the notion expressed by Buckminster Fuller that "A child as designed is designed to be a tremendous success" (Fuller and Smith, 1972).

Ontario is fortunate in having had available for a decade strong policy statements on the education of young children, statements that have been confirmed by subsequent research into how young children learn. Both The Formative Years and its resource guide, Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions, provide a strong and valid philosophical underpinning for the development of materials and methods for the instruction of young pupils. Shared Discovery, a curriculum support document to The Formative Years, was issued earlier this year, along with a slide/tape presentation entitled So Dead Keen. They are designed to assist teachers in planning programs based on their observations of children in action.

In its deliberations with a broad spectrum of parents in different regions of Ontario, the Project staff found that parents' views of the ideal education for young children virtually always coincided with those expressed in the Ministry of Education statements; education should be child-centred, adapted to individual rates and natural styles of learning, provide a rich and varied environment to whet curiosity and stimulate exploration, and continuously challenge them to expand their understanding of the world around them.

4.4 Some Problem Areas

Although the Project members drew renewed confidence from the strengths they saw in our educational system, they were aware as well of its weaknesses. The philosophy of The Formative Years had quite clearly not been consistently implemented, nor in many cases had schools adapted the curriculum to respond to the changing socio-cultural background of their pupils. School systems in general are often characterized by rigidity, one manifestation of which is the discontinuity that is frequently evident between stages of the child's education, for example between kindergarten and Grade 1 and between the Primary and Junior Division. Partnership between parent and teacher and between school and community frequently remains an ideal, disregarded all too often by school systems unaware of its potential benefits and sometimes apprehensive about "interference" from people perceived as outside the system. Finally, the problem of coordinating community and provincial agencies to support families with growing children still awaits a solution.

5. CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

For those who want early primary education to receive increased emphasis and resources, the principal challenge is to assert its value with sufficient cogency to place it on at least as firm a footing as any other stage of the educational process - and therefore worthy of at least as much attention and financial support. Parents, educational decision-makers, and the public generally must be made aware that education in these years is not only a legitimate learning experience in its own right, but is critically important to children's success both in and out of school. These early years are neither a "babysitting service" nor an innocuous preliminary to the upper grades where "real" subject-based learning takes place. The advantages conferred on young children through placement in stimulating, carefully planned learning environments must be explained with greater clarity and persuasiveness, both within and outside the educational community. The principles enunciated in the Ministry of Education statements a decade ago must be put into practice on a province-wide scale.

It is important to emphasize to legislators and other policy-makers that the Primary Division enrolls nearly one-third of Ontario's 1.7 million students. These pupils account for the expenditure of a substantial portion of the total school budget. This project is an attempt to ensure that those resources are invested effectively and efficiently.

An important factor in meeting this challenge is the formation of a new kind of partnership between families and schools, in which parents and teachers work together in the interests of children. If the child's learning is to be continuous and integrated, and if parents are to understand what primary teachers are trying to accomplish, regular consultation and close cooperation among parents, teachers, and principals is essential.

Since parents are the first educators and have a powerful influence on their children, the long-term goal of this partnership is to enable parents through continuous, direct interaction with the school to find the support and guidance they need to offer their children healthy and enriching experiences. The partnership also enables the school to exert a more enduring impact on the learning and maturation of its pupils. Development of this kind of parent-teacher cooperation -- which must go well beyond the twice yearly post-report card interviews -- demands that, where necessary, parents and teachers acquire the skills to enable them to collaborate effectively.

Involvement of parents on a continuous basis is particularly important in the processes of early and ongoing identification and program planning currently being carried out in Ontario school systems. Many people who wrote to the Project or took part in its discussions expressed concern that the Early Identification process might focus too heavily on the child's deficits and limit contact between parent and teacher. It was felt that the process should be an ongoing one that begins early, emphasizes learning about the whole child and includes frequent parent-teacher contact. In its statements about the process the Ministry of Education has stressed that it is designed to ensure that a co-operative assessment and program planning process be initiated when the child begins school (or no later than the beginning of Grade 1), and that this process continue throughout the school life of the child. Parents, teachers, and other professionals are to be involved and strengths are to be identified as well as special needs. The policies enunciated by the Ministry require renewed emphasis so that early identification processes throughout the province take account of the child's talents and strengths in order to develop an accurate and balanced "learning profile" for every child.

All too frequently, of course, the parents whose help and cooperation is most needed are those least likely

to visit the school. Some of them are preoccupied with today's economic pressures, others may be newcomers unfamiliar with the system and unsure of themselves, still others may have achieved little success in their own formal education and thus feel inhibited about approaching the school. If these conditions are not to undermine the parents' confidence and alienate them from their role as the most important educators of their children, primary education and other support services provided for families must be complementary to the home. Responsibility for the education of their children should rest as much with parent and community as with professional educators. The challenge for all professionals working with families is to join forces, using resources available locally and provincially, to provide support to parents and help them to fulfil their educational responsibilities.

Another challenge arises from the cultural diversity that now characterizes much of Ontario society. Community-based programs that build on the pluralistic nature of our society strengthen home-school-community cooperation and ensure that local differences in culture are valued and used as starting points for learning. As the Ontario Minister of Education said in the introduction to The Formative Years: "As always, the major challenge falls to educators at the local level to translate the objectives into relevant learning experiences for each of our children". In order to be relevant, learning experiences that take account of specific family backgrounds must be created. The Project recognizes the formidable task this presents to the teacher who faces a class of youngsters from a wide variety of ethno-cultural backgrounds. But it must be accomplished if these young children are to feel "at home" in our schools.

It is time we made a real effort to shift emphasis from remediation to prevention and enrichment. A great many of the suggestions and recommendations the Project received have focussed on prevention. People are increasingly

realizing that high-quality day care and pre-school experiences that mesh smoothly with later kindergarten and primary programs can have a long-term positive impact on the learning and development of children (Weikart, 1984). Through such programs, not only will we accommodate the future needs of learners but we can also reduce the placement of children in costly programs, such as remedial and special education.

Heightened awareness of the value of carefully planned early education has resulted in large part from the abundance of research studies that have reached similar conclusions. As always, it has taken a long time for educational practitioners to incorporate new knowledge into the curriculum. Fortunately, recent studies of the implementation process have yielded new insights into its complexity, and suggested strategies we can employ to expedite the translation of research findings into classroom practice (Fullan, 1982).

An essential element of these strategies is planned and continuing professional development of teachers. We are now aware that issuance of a written document and the holding of a few regional or even system-wide study sessions are not enough, not nearly enough. In-service programs of professional development must somehow be built into the very structure of our educational system so that they become part and parcel of a teacher's experience rather than a series of unconnected events scattered over the school year. The Project's recommendations for the organization of the Primary Division are designed to ensure that professional development of the teacher goes on all the time as a natural part of the day's work.

In conclusion, we must apply what research has told us about the benefits of high-quality early intervention so that young children can develop their powers of mind and spirit, and become effective lifelong learners

who can live in harmony with themselves, their families, and the global community.

The views expressed on parental involvement in schools were similar to those already mentioned. The classroom should extend into the community in order to blend school-based instruction with what children are learning outside school, and to reduce barriers between family life and formal education. Respondents offered an abundance of suggestions on how support services and programs for families and young children could be better coordinated, and where they might be best located. The need for a wide range of services was underlined; these include preschool programs, drop-in centres for parents with young children, counselling clinics, crisis intervention centres, parenting education, toy lending libraries -- the list goes on.

6. CHILD, SCHOOL, AND CURRICULUM

The lived-world of the child, the mode of being-in-the-world that is characteristic of childhood, is such that the child lives in a world that invites exploration... his curriculum is his life project.

Urie Bronfenbrenner
Two Worlds of Childhood

The child's curriculum is a lifelong project of exploration and growth through the dynamic interplay of maturation and experience, both critical to the learning process. This view of curriculum far transcends our earlier notions of empty-vessel-to-be-filled, or practice for adult life. From the beginning the young child reaches out and explores to make sense of her world and to find her place and identify in it. From the beginning he initiates, perseveres, and solves problems, moving from a rudimentary perception of his needs in his own world toward a broader view of his needs in the larger context of family, school, community and culture. It is a journey filled with high drama. Many other people play supporting roles along the way, and so we must carefully consider not only the child as leading actor but also others in the cast and the arrangement of the stage.

Children today in all cultures learn in much the same way as those of yesterday -- naturally, through play. The fact that we have only recently begun to value play as valid learning rather than dismiss it as frivolity reflects our own ignorance of the educational process. Curiosity and novelty drive children through a labyrinth of trial-and-error to figure out, test out and make sense. With each discovery they gain more competence, and feel the motivating force of satisfaction and worth that stimulates further learning.

Perhaps the best examples to illustrate that children are not mere processors of information, but do

learn and achieve in spontaneous ways are learning to walk and learning to talk. The fact that learning occurs naturally does not mean, however, that it happens in isolation, or that children today are not affected by the barrage of information to which they are exposed. Indeed, they often know a great deal about aspects of culture, including technology, cultural diversity, and social changes.

In spite of the complexity of society, learning still occurs naturally through interaction with peers and adults, both of whom serve as models for emulation. Significant experiences in the home, the school, and the community influence the child's interpretation of his learning and identity. This growth and development does not take place in disparate "stages" or places; children learn continuously. The challenge in primary education is to offer them both continuity and consistency in educational opportunity.

Until recently we have tended to take narrow views of the child as receiver, the course of study as prescription, and the school as isolated from home and community. In light of what we now know about child development and the crucial role of the larger society, we need a more integrated view of curriculum that embraces the "lived world" of the child and facilitates continuity of growth and development. Now that the world of the children who come into our classrooms has become more culturally diverse, the school must heighten its awareness of the child's culture and home experiences and build on them. The curriculum can thereby provide "horizontal" continuity between home and school, helping children to see the school program as an extension of family experiences.

As we consider the renewal of curriculum, we must review our primary programs to achieve continuity of learning opportunities throughout the Primary Division, or what one might term "vertical" continuity. Gaps in planning

and communication can obstruct the child's progress. Planning and consultation among teachers on a Division-wide basis are therefore essential.

Any reorganization of the Primary Division must take into account the quality of those responsible for providing the educational experience. As never before, we need sensitive educators who not only are knowledgeable about human growth and development, but who can also create learning environments that accommodate varying needs, interests, and talents. Such qualifications should not be left to chance. We need to update professional certification for primary education at pre-service and in-service levels, and ensure expert leadership and concrete support for teachers through an updating of curriculum policy and development of appropriate support materials.

6.1 Organization of the Primary Division

Children learn and develop best in an environment characterized by continuity and flexibility. The experience of learning follows a natural flow that the school should attempt to preserve. It should not put up artificial barriers to learning impeding one child's readiness to move ahead quickly or depriving another of the need to take time to acquire certain concepts or to gain confidence in the school environment. Nor, in view of the unbounded curiosity of children, should learning experiences be required to fit into neatly defined subject categories. The curriculum, therefore, should provide an environment which allows the child to establish relationships and to understand his world as a whole.

As children progress through the primary years, the curriculum must be designed to meet a broad range of developmental needs: intellectual, emotional, physical, social, spiritual, and aesthetic. Among children in this active and critical stage of their lives, the variation

across this range of needs is substantial. Growth, development and learning vary from child to child and from one period in a child's life to another. Flexibility in curriculum organization is therefore essential to enable teachers to respond to the needs of pupils on an individual basis and to permit pupils to advance at a rate that challenges their abilities without requiring them to move in unison.

In many Ontario schools, kindergartens operate separately from the rest of the school. One result is that little planning and communication occurs among teachers within the Primary Division (Ministry of Education, 1983). Another, is that there is not nearly enough scope for interaction among children who, although of different ages, may be at the same developmental levels and could profit from the opportunity to work together in classroom activities.

This image of the young child as a learner developing at different rates across a range of dimensions is based on both research into child development and the experience of teachers and parents (Kagan, 1984 and Yardley, 1970). It argues for a maximum of continuity and flexibility in the curriculum and integration of the learning experiences and of age groups. The learning environment that best embodies these qualities is an integrated unit, designed as a continuum rather than a series of separate steps. Such a unit permits children to advance at their own pace and interact with classmates of different ages, and makes it easier for teachers to provide learning experiences that address the needs of the whole child.

Communication between the Primary and Junior Divisions should also be improved. It is important that strong planning links be established with the Junior Division to ensure that the learning experiences it provides build on the foundation developed in the Primary Division.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

1. THAT the Ministry of Education require school boards to ensure that the Primary Division as defined in the Education Act be organized as an integrated planning unit to facilitate continuity and consistency in the provision of programs and services.
2. THAT school boards develop policies and procedures to ensure continuity in planning and communication on a regular basis:
 - among staff within the Primary Division;
 - between Primary and Junior Divisions;
 - between teachers in the Primary Division and parents/caregivers;
 - between the school and the community.
3. THAT school boards in organizing the Primary Division ensure that the following criteria are met:
 - staffing according to experience and interest in working with young children and attainment of Primary Education qualifications (See Recommendation 17a in Teacher Education);

- curriculum which supports the concept of the learner as a self-directed problem-solver and based upon the philosophy, objectives and learning principles expressed in The Formative Years and Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions;
- systematic planning and evaluation with the emphasis on maintaining quality programs and services;
- planned in-service, supervision and other support for teachers;
- equipment and materials based upon the developmental levels of children;
- communication with parents to ensure that they understand the aims, objectives and expectations of the Primary Division;
- plans for active participation of parents to assist teachers to meet the individual needs of pupils and to ensure that parents have a substantial involvement in their child's education;
- establishment of communication links with daycare, caregivers and others involved in the education of young children to ensure consistency and continuity in program.

6.2 Leadership

The quality of programs and services in the Primary Division is more likely to improve if strong, consistent leadership and supervision are provided. Such leadership will facilitate the kinds of action necessary for the Division to function more effectively. The following activities are seen as central to the success of the integrated unit proposed:

- team planning within the Division;
- systematic professional development;
- identification of early and ongoing educational needs, and the provision of programs and services to meet them;
- regular assessment of programs to identify strengths and needs and to specify program goals;
- development of cooperation among school, home, and community;
- enhancement of public awareness and understanding of the purposes and benefits of school programs for young children.

Studies of early primary education have identified effective management and monitoring of programs as criteria for achieving and maintaining high quality (Schweinhart and Weikart, 1980).

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

4. THAT leadership and support be provided in the school to ensure that the criteria outlined in Recommendation 3 are met.

6.3 Flexible Entry

Development of the child does not proceed in a smooth upward climb, but rather in spurts. Children have individual rates of maturation, rates to which their learning needs are closely related. In view of the variability in children's social, physical, and intellectual levels of development, flexibility of entrance into and progression throughout the Primary Division is considered beneficial for most, if not all, children.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

5. THAT the Ministry of Education and school boards provide for children's unique patterns of development by adjusting policies to permit flexible entry into and progression throughout the Primary Division.

6.4 Junior Kindergarten Programs

Even though junior kindergarten has become more widely available across the province, there is a need to broaden access to it so that eventually all children are able to attend. Parents are concerned that in some communities only those who can afford nursery schools can provide an educational program for their children at this critical stage of learning.

There is some research to suggest that the fourth year is, or could be a period when most children begin to be influenced by the outside environment (Katz, 1984). It is reasonable to assume therefore, that the child's fourth year is a period of rapid acquisition of interpersonal competencies and language skills. Most children at this age have an inquisitive mind and are able to explore larger environments and new relationships.

In Ontario, junior kindergarten programs were originally established to provide compensatory education for disadvantaged populations (i.e., children of low-income, immigrant, inner-city and multi-problem families). Recent follow-up studies of the original Head Start programs and similar programs provide clear evidence that early education has a positive impact on disadvantaged children in both the short and the long term (Weikart, 1984).

Children "at risk" are now found in all classes, cultures and geographical areas. They require a wide range of programs and services, and parents generally prefer that these be offered in their neighbourhood school. Moreover, school boards are increasingly recognizing the benefit that all children, not just the disadvantaged, can derive from junior kindergarten programs.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

6.a) THAT the Ministry of Education require school boards, over the next five years, to phase in junior kindergarten programs;

b) THAT school boards establishing junior kindergarten programs observe the following criteria:

- provision of facilities and space in accordance with the loading factor and specifications defined in the

Ministry of Education Capital Grant Plan;

- class size and adult/pupil ratios determined by the specific needs of the children served (A range of 16 to 20 pupils is suggested.);
- flexibility in policies with regard to attendance, transportation, scheduling and timetabling.

7. THAT school boards issue a parent's guide explaining the value, purpose, and nature of the Primary Division programs and informing parents that attendance in junior kindergarten and kindergarten is optional.

6.5 Kindergarten Programs

For some children, extended or full-day kindergarten may be particularly advantageous. These are children who may not experience an environment in which reading books, solving problems, playing with numbers, and interacting with adults is encouraged. Lacking the enriched experiences which all children require for learning and development, these children are often at a serious disadvantage in later schooling.

A study of full-day kindergarten carried out recently in Ontario demonstrated that such a program can contribute to significant educational gains by five-year-old children (Bates, 1981). Parents and teachers participating in the study commented on the strength of the program by indicating growth in such areas as oral language use, physical coordination, social and emotional development, the arts, self-confidence, and improved relationships with both

peers and adults. A follow-up study indicated that the gains made in full-day kindergarten were sustained into the Junior Division, findings that support the exploration of full-day kindergartens for certain groups of children (Bates, 1985).

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

8. THAT the Ministry of Education investigate the feasibility of introducing extended and full-day kindergarten programs.

6.6 Curriculum Policy and Support Materials

Ministry of Education reviews of The Formative Years have revealed a need to focus more strongly on the early primary years and to place a heavier emphasis on continuity throughout the Primary Division. Program expectations for the Division must be articulated to school boards and teachers to assist them in planning programs within a five-year continuum for the proposed integrated Primary unit. The Ministry also needs to provide support material to assist school boards and teachers in designing of learning environments and planning of programs. These include:

- a balance of activities (indoor/outdoor, individual, small/large group, child/staff initiated);
- materials, equipment and activities suited to different developmental and learning needs;
- effective and flexible use of time and space;
- strategies for adapting programs and environments to meet identified and changing needs of children;

- attention and accommodation to individual developmental levels and learning styles;
- child/adult ratios to match the needs of young children and staff and to facilitate the accomplishment of goals and expectations of integrated primary programs;
- effective ways of keeping parents informed and involved as observers and contributors to the program.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

- 9.a) THAT the Ministry of Education update The Formative Years (Circular P1J1) based on the document, Program Expectations for the Primary Division (Appendix A). The up-dated circular should describe a developmental continuum for key aspects of curriculum, and support the concept of play as the child's natural and legitimate way of learning;
- b) THAT additional support materials be developed to help teachers implement the proposed changes in the Primary Division.

6.7 Evaluation

According to The Formative Years, the policy of the Ontario Government is that "every child have the opportunity to develop as completely as possible in the direction of his or her talents and needs". In order to overcome the tendency toward a deficit orientation for early and ongoing identification procedures, a profile recognizing talents and strengths as well as needs and based on ongoing observation should be compiled. This could be used as a

basis for planning appropriate learning activities, as a means for facilitating optimal development of each child, and as a record for use in communication with parents.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

10. THAT the Ministry of Education design a guide for the development, by school boards, of "child learning profiles" which will identify the talents and interests as well as the needs of individuals, and indicate how the program will be adapted to the individual child.
11. THAT school boards be required to ensure that the "child learning profiles" they develop are reviewed regularly by parents, teachers and children.

6.8 Professional Development

Research tells us that the school is the primary focus of change. If policies and programs are to be implemented effectively, attitudinal change must take place at the instructional level, among the teachers and principals (Fullan, 1982). Professional development of teachers must reflect current research into effective implementation of educational programs.

The Ministry of Education Provincial Review, Professional Development Practices, (1985) reports that successful programs in professional development include involvement of teachers in planning, activities directly related to classroom programs, evaluation and follow-up activities, and the practice of new ideas and methods.

Among the report's recommendations are that school boards and teachers consider:

- the need for a planned professional development program which enables teachers to implement new or revised programs;
- the need for planners and initiators to consult with and inform teachers throughout the process; and
- the place of less formal professional development such as staff meetings, inter-classroom visits, etc., in the overall plan at the system level.

Although professional development should and does take various forms, one avenue of in-service training readily accessible to teachers is use of the days in the school year designated for professional activity. A number of teachers who took part in the Project's deliberations expressed dissatisfaction with the "fragmentation" of these days, and said they would like them to focus more strongly on the particular needs of teachers at the school level. It is therefore suggested that professional activity days, as one component of professional development, be used by staff members of the Primary Division for the review and planning necessary for effective program development.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

12. THAT the Ministry of Education and school boards adjust current policies on staff professional development, including the use of professional activity days, to ensure that they reflect effective implementation practices.

7. TEACHER EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

Teachers must learn to work within more varied and non-traditional settings, as well as differently within traditional ones. Because of the trend toward greater community involvement with schools at all levels, teachers must learn to work more closely with parents and other educational groups. And they will need to be aware of, and prepared to put into practice, new theories of learning and new learning styles.

Towards the Year 2000

7.1 Ontario Teacher's Certificate Holders

Teachers have been the major mediators and change-agents in the individual learning process. But challenges for the teaching profession at all levels have increased markedly over the last decade. Factors which will likely alter the nature of the teaching/learning process over the next few years include the need to adapt to a less cohesive and more pluralistic set of community values and diverse learning needs and the increase in family and community involvement in determining educational goals and learning objectives.

There is, also, the issue of the maintenance and renewal of the teaching profession in the light of the aging of the current cohort of teachers and the apparent constraints on teacher intake and on opportunities for in-service professional development. The need for continual renewal of professional competence takes on particular significance, given the conditions that are likely to prevail for the next few years. Renewal is also necessary for teachers intent on keeping abreast of research and development and upgrading their qualifications.

A need to increase the number of high quality pre-service, in-service and postgraduate courses currently available for teachers in this province has been highlighted

as a concern in early primary education. Currently, all teacher education institutions offer programs with a concentration at the primary and junior levels. These programs have some focus on early primary but the coverage is far from adequate. A lack of specialized staff and resources in early childhood education is cited as a problem in most faculties of education.

The Institute of Child Study at the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, offers an excellent two-year concentration on the education of young children but can only accommodate a limited number of students.

Study sessions and community forums have underlined that prospective early primary education teachers are seen to require special skills and attributes which can be developed only through a carefully designed pre-service training program focussing on:

- principles of child development
- active listening and attending
- critical thinking and creativity
- child observation techniques and
- human relations activities, etc.

Declining enrolment creates another problem. Using the mutual agreement clause, teachers who have little or no training in early primary education are frequently assigned to the early years of the Primary Division, namely, junior kindergarten and kindergarten.

It was repeatedly suggested that a specialized Bachelor of Education degree be developed which would include:

- a compulsory practicum
- participation in a demonstration or laboratory school
- a period of supervised internship

Input to the project has requested that pre-service and in-service education courses for teachers be revised to include additional core objectives. These would require that candidates become knowledgeable:

- about factors beyond the school environment that affect children's learning within the classroom;
- about the primary role of the family in educating its children and the powerful influence it has on the degree to which children derive satisfaction from learning;
- about ways to assist parents in developing a team approach for the mutual support and education of children and to participate in this partnership;
- about ways to identify and use services that are available through the school board, local government and community agencies to assist both parents and teachers in their joint educational role.

Reference is made in this and other sections of the report to "appropriate Primary Education qualifications". An appropriate qualification for an area of specialization is Part 1 of the three courses leading to the Specialist Certificate in that area; in the case of primary education, the qualification is Primary Education, Part 1. These additional qualification courses are available in Ontario in both summer and winter sessions.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

13. THAT the Ministry of Colleges and Universities survey teacher education

institutions to determine whether their current Primary/Junior pre-service programs reflect a thorough understanding of the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual needs of children aged four to eight, including children with special needs, and that a practicum is available in classes for four- and five-year olds as well as those aged six to eight.

14. THAT an additional pre-service year for specialization in education of early primary age children be established in faculties with adequate staff and resources as determined by the survey.
15. THAT the current three-part additional qualification courses leading to a Primary Specialist be restructured to allow a candidate a choice of concentration on early primary education (children four to six years) or primary education (children six to eight years). Each part should include a practicum.
16. THAT the Ministry require, that in order to be eligible for a course leading to a Primary Specialist, teachers hold a Primary Division entry on their Ontario Teacher Qualifications Record Card (OTQRC).
- 17a) THAT the Ministry require all certificated teachers employed in the Primary Division to hold appropriate Primary Education qualifications or equivalent by September 1990;

- b) THAT the principals and supervisory officers with responsibility for the Primary Division be encouraged to hold Primary Education qualifications.
18. THAT holders of an OTC with Primary/Junior qualifications and a Ryerson Early Childhood Education degree, a diploma from the Institute of Child Study, or equivalent, be considered by the Ministry for equivalent standing toward a Primary Education Specialist Certificate.
 19. THAT objectives of courses leading to principals' qualifications, and of pre-service and in-service courses for teachers, be revised to include the skills and knowledge required to develop high-quality programs for children and to strengthen partnerships among schools, families and community agencies.

7.2 Early Childhood Education Diploma Graduates

As long as junior kindergarten and kindergarten remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, a degree will be the basic qualification for entry to a program leading to teacher certification. However, there is an important role for the ECE diploma graduate as a teaching assistant in a differentiated staffing model.

Bridging should be developed to enable an individual with early childhood qualifications and a degree to be certified without a full year at a teacher education institution. The following alternative could be considered: Ontario Regulation 269 could be amended to allow a person in this category to enroll in an additional basic course in the

Primary Division during a summer session, teach successfully for a year on a Provisional Letter of Standing, return the next summer to complete the additional basic course in the Junior Division, and then be granted an Ontario Teacher's Certificate with concentration in Early Primary Education, Primary and Junior Division.

Conversely, an individual holding a degree and teacher certification should be able to obtain Early Childhood Education qualifications without being required to attend the full two-year course at a College of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT).

Teacher education institutions and CAATs should be encouraged to work in a more cooperative way in the early childhood field. Currently, candidates enrolled in the pre-service program at the Faculty of Education, Brock University, who are taking a concentration at the primary/junior level may select courses in early childhood education from the Niagara College of Applied Arts and Technology and have these courses credited towards an Ontario Teacher's Certificate.

Students from the Early Childhood Education concentration at Niagara may have these same courses accepted toward a Bachelor of Arts degree at Brock University. The Faculty of Education at York University and Seneca College have a similar arrangement.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

- 20a) THAT the Ministry of Colleges and Universities survey those CAATs that offer Early Childhood Education diploma programs to determine whether they include an option for school-based differentiated staffing, with adequate focus on the four- and five-year old child; and

- b) THAT a practicum be available in classes for four-and five-year olds in an elementary school setting.
21. THAT school boards be encouraged:
- a) to establish a policy requiring that salaried persons, other than certificated teachers, hired to work with children in the early primary years hold an Early Childhood Education diploma; and
 - b) to encourage salaried persons presently employed as teaching assistants, without Early Childhood Education training, to enrol in the diploma courses available in part-time evening or summer programs at CAATs.
- 22a) THAT the Deputy Minister of Education strike a committee of Presidents of Colleges and Universities which offer programs leading to an Early Childhood Education Diploma or an Ontario Teachers' Certificate to examine equivalency mechanisms for Early Childhood Education graduates wishing to complete their Bachelor's degree; and
- b) THAT the Teacher Education Section, University Relations Branch, in cooperation with the Ontario Association of Deans of Education, examine equivalency mechanisms for Ontario Teacher's Certificate applicants holding a bachelor degree, an Early Childhood Education Diploma and successful school-based practical experience.

7.3 Teacher Education Centres

One of the most frequent comments stated in the briefs submitted to the Early Primary Education Project was the need to establish teacher education centres or centres of specialization in the province.

An interesting development reported in the recent literature on requirements for the training and certification of teachers in early primary education is the increasing use of some form of teacher centre involving school administrators, team teachers, child development associates, researchers and evaluators (O'Bryan, 1984). These centres focus on working with children directly rather than studying them in experimental learning situations.

In such centres, there is close liaison with school boards, community colleges, faculties of education, professional teacher organizations and Ministry of Education. These institutions supply highly trained professionals who work with the teachers in the centres as visiting or in-house practicum leaders. Teachers' aides and para-professionals add a community component to the centre by interacting with the child, family, teacher and administration.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

- 23a) THAT the Ministry initiate the establishment of Teacher Education Centres, French and English, in selected areas of the province for the purpose of pre-service and in-service training of teachers in primary education as well as practicum locations for Early Childhood Education students wishing to work in differentiated staffing situations in elementary schools;

- b) THAT such Centres be developed in cooperation with the Ministry, the local board(s), teacher education institutions and CAATs, the Ontario Teachers' Federation and other appropriate regional/community resources;
 - c) THAT the focus of activity, research, and development be the school classroom;
 - d) THAT coordination of the Centres' activities be the responsibility of a qualified primary educator;
 - e) THAT the teacher education institution involved develop, in consultation with the Ministry of Education's Research Branch, a research proposal to document and evaluate the exemplary practices that will evolve from the Centres;
 - f) THAT the Research Branch of the Ministry of Education appoint a Research Officer to coordinate the research generated in the Centres across the province.
24. THAT, on the release of this report, the Ministry of Education send relevant recommendations to the Steering Committee of the Ontario Teacher Education Review.

8. LINKING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY

It is the task of those who do care about the early lives of young children to set up 'child-friendly' environments...in such environments parents as well as significant others take part in their young children's early lives.

Valerie Polokow Suransky
The Erosion of Childhood

8.1 Developing Partnerships in the Education of Children

The child today has many educators; the family, the school, and the community all play important roles. Parents and other family members occupy the major roles; they are in the most influential position to educate their children. Policies and support services must therefore be designed to reflect the primary role of families and enable them to function to the greatest benefit of children. At the same time, these policies must take into account other adults who are partners in the educational process and can contribute to the enrichment of the lives of children during their formative years.

In earlier times, sharing the responsibility for the education of children was the natural outgrowth of a simpler, largely rural, and more closely knit society. Children often assisted in adult work and acquired a variety of skills in the process, although adults probably did not see themselves as "educators". Today we know that what our grandparents sensed was right; a stable, healthy family life and strong community ties are crucial to the growing child and, ultimately, to the well-being of society.

Beyond the family circle, the school is the community's main agency for the education of children. By working closely with the local community and with parents, the school can probably best determine how educational and

other resources might be adapted to help families with young children meet their changing needs. Schools therefore constitute a primary locus for the linking of resources from within and outside the school system. By strengthening school-family relationships and establishing strong links with municipal departments, regional services of various provincial ministries, community organizations, and volunteer groups, the school can emerge from its all-too-frequent isolation and gradually evolve into an educational centre for both children and parents.

Development of productive partnerships of this kind will require changes in perspective among parents, teachers, principals, and staff members of municipal departments and community agencies. They need to see themselves as integral parts of a support system for the children of the community, working together without undue concern for "territorial rights". It goes without saying that this kind of attitudinal change will take time to occur.

Although the family has the primary responsibility for nurturing its children, the family by itself often cannot respond to their increasingly complex needs. Nor can any single community institution or government agency provide the wide range of services children need as they grow and develop. Only by working cooperatively can all concerned ensure a range of resources to help the family to raise and educate its young: resources from the province, municipality, school and community can complement one another in supporting and strengthening the family.

8.2 Changed Perceptions of the Family and the Child

Our notion of family has undergone substantial change. For example, the formulation of family policy in Ontario today is based on the premise that family encompasses two or more persons in a parent-and-child

relationship in which one is dependent on the other for care and/or support (Cabinet Meeting, June 29, 1983, min. no. 3-31/83). This definition includes children related to parents through birth, adoption, or guardianship, and parents or guardians who are single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, or living in a common law and/or contractual arrangement.

In addition, we have developed a better understanding of what might be termed the "ecology of childhood." Children relate to school not as isolated individuals but as members of families, peer groups, and communities. Each child brings to the school not only a personality with unique characteristics, but an amalgam of all the influences exerted by the family and by the neighbourhood and its particular culture. The strength of these influences has important implications for parents and other adults who share responsibilities for nurturing young children. Because their influence is crucial to the child's formation, they must increase their understanding of how children grow and mature and how their learning environments can be enriched.

What is required is a new type of adult partnership that will develop and support an environment that takes into account the full range of children's needs, broadens their scope for learning, and enables them to form a variety of interpersonal relationships. This kind of adult partnership assumes that biological parents are not the only people who are or should be involved in parenting functions. Families can no longer be treated as self-contained units. Attitudes must be developed that strengthen and support the relationships among parents, children, and professional service providers. In this kind of partnership, responsibility for educating children is shared by home, school and community.

8.3 Implications of Social Changes for Children's Education

In today's society, a number of factors make it more difficult for families to perform their traditional educational role. These include high levels of unemployment, the need for both parents to work outside the home, the disappearance of the extended family, increased mobility, and the tendency to categorize people by age (children, teenagers, senior citizens, etc.) and thus fragment society.

Certain types of living conditions common today deprive both parents and children of companionship, producing feelings of isolation in parents and severely limiting the socializing experiences of children. Examples of such conditions include living in highrise apartment buildings, in suburban developments with no sense of neighbourhood, in isolated rural communities, and in homes where the first language is other than English or French. The sense of isolation is reinforced by a trend towards recreation designed for individuals rather than for the whole family. Many parents find that there are very few affordable programs or activities that are designed specifically for young children. Families therefore need better access to information about programs and services that will respond to the needs that they are experiencing.

Young single mothers, including teenaged mothers who keep their children, require additional support. The Toronto Star of October 11, 1984 quoted from Statistics Canada that half of all young single mothers in Canada depend on welfare, unemployment insurance payments, and other government financial support. It was estimated that more than 160,000 women across the country are trying on their own to bring up young children. About 75% of young single mothers spend a high proportion of their income on housing and thus generally occupy the least desirable accommodation.

In addition, there are many other segments of our society that have particular needs for support, both from the school and from the community agencies. These include the children of Native people and those from ethno-cultural groups new to Ontario, and children of families separated by long distances, especially in rural and northern areas of the province. In these cases, the school and other agencies must seek ways to support parents in their role as the prime educators of their children. Not only will this approach simplify the job of the school in the long run, but it will provide children with much stronger support than the school unaided could hope to offer.

Because of these and other difficulties encountered by families today, parents are increasingly looking toward schools and other community agencies to help them with their personal needs and with those of their children. In addition, parents generally are aware of the value of broadening the educational environment beyond the classroom walls and school gates. Contributions of various sectors of the community can enhance the education of every child, build bridges between generations, and create the awareness of community so often lacking in society today.

8.4 New Roles for School Boards

Some school boards and schools already have established links with their communities, but for many others, the kind of partnerships implied in these introductory comments will require fresh perspectives and new modes of relating to other organizations. The Project therefore believes that the Ministry of Education should provide guidelines that would give boards some general direction along with information about successful models to which they might look for guidance. To highlight the advantages of cooperation, the guidelines should emphasize the savings in time and money possible through the consolidation of the resources of boards, local

municipalities, community agencies, and the regional offices of other provincial ministries.

One example of the new tasks facing schools and requiring cooperation is the design of orientation programs for immigrant parents and other newcomers, informing them about the services and programs available for young children and helping them understand their rights and responsibilities in their children's education. Successful programs of this nature already in operation in several school systems could be adapted for use by other boards seeking to respond to similar needs. Another example is the preparation, in an effective, easy-to-use format, of directories of the community programs and services available for families with young children. These might employ such current technology as Telidon terminals to make a wide range of information readily accessible to parents, educators, and all other people who need it. Finally, the distribution by the Ministry of Education of guidelines for the linking of services carries with it a set of expectations, and may thus serve to encourage school boards to initiate or at least be receptive to cooperative endeavours.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

25. THAT the Ministry of Education provide guidelines for school boards regarding the role that each board and its schools should play in helping to link services within the local community to assist families in nurturing their children.

8.5 Interministerial Cooperation

If linking efforts are to achieve maximum effectiveness, they will require collaboration on a broad scale, bringing together the resources of all provincial ministries whose activities relate in any way to families

and children. Those resources include a number of agencies operating at the district and community levels, such as children's social services (including coordinating and advisory groups), district health councils, family service/counselling centres, county health units, and community centres. Ministries generally considered outside the traditional purview of social services need to be involved in order to expand the scope for cooperation. Both financial and human resources must be shared among these ministries in order to employ them more effectively and economically than at present. A few of the tasks to be accomplished through collaboration include the following:

- identifying the needs of families for support in carrying out their nurturing and educational responsibilities;
- finding ways to use provincial, municipal, and school board resources collectively to answer these needs;
- disseminating information about the resources and services these partners can share;
- locating funds to enable municipalities to employ community liaison staff who would help bring together the resources of the school and the community.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

26. THAT the Minister of Education negotiate with other provincial Ministers to plan and implement strategies, at both the provincial and regional levels, that will require increased collaboration among their agencies and institutions that serve families with young children. They include the Ministers of Community and

Social Services, Citizenship and Culture, Agriculture and Food, Health, Tourism and Recreation, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Northern Affairs and the Provincial Secretary for Social Development.

The tendency for provincial ministries and community agencies to operate in isolation even while serving the same people results in part from the specificity of their mandate; it tends to restrict the scope of their work unduly. At present, the mandate of the regional offices of the Ministry of Education does not formally include outreach to field offices of other ministries, municipal departments, and other agencies. Similarly, other sectors of society do not fully recognize their role in the educational process, despite the abundance and variety of assistance they could offer. The Project therefore felt that the Ministry of Education, through its regional offices and the Regional Education Councils, could stimulate the needed cooperation in the hope that eventually it would expand and continue on a regular, systematic basis.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

27. THAT the regional offices of the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Regional Education Councils, explore ways to expand their networks and to foster increased cooperation among schools, municipalities, social service and volunteer agencies, and other government ministries concerned with families and children.

8.6 Family Resource Centres

In recent years, parents in many parts of Ontario have worked in association with schools and various community groups to establish "family resource centres", to use their usual generic title. Basically, the centres are places that provide a variety of support services to families with young children. They defy precise definition because their form and function vary with the needs and characteristics of the communities. The centres are grass-roots organizations that have grown out of needs for particular kinds of assistance. Sometimes they are located in schools, sometimes not, and their ties with local school systems range from close to tenuous. A Project-sponsored survey of selected Ontario family resource centres identified four benefits common to all those surveyed:

- parents and children receive a positive social and learning experience;
- a community orientation is provided to the school enhancing the school as a learning centre;
- parents develop greater self-esteem;
- both parents and children feel less isolated (Major, 1984).

Additional information on family resource centres, their characteristics, and typical activities is available from the Project office. Other examples of linking services are included in Appendix B of this report.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

- 28a) THAT school boards be encouraged to cooperate with local municipalities and community agencies that wish to establish

family resource centres, or other cooperative non-profit educational support centres, which may or may not be located in vacant school space;

- b) THAT the Ministry of Education publish resource materials for distribution to school boards, municipalities, agencies and institutions that describe what family resource centres are, how they are established and financed, and what benefits they offer for families with young children.

8.7 Need for Parenting Skills

The acquisition of parenting skills is basic to the formation of a strong, cohesive family life. Schools currently offer a number of activities in parenting, such as "Kindergym," in which parents bring their young children with them to class. Activities such as these provide parents with valuable opportunities for discussion and guidance, and should be made readily accessible to those who want them.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

29. THAT the Ministry of Education fund parenting courses offered to adults by schools in response to community needs under the Continuing Education provisions, just as it does with adult programs such as English as a Second Language and Adult Basic Education.

8.8 Flexibility in Children's Programs and Services, and Implications for Service Providers

One outcome of current social and economic trends is the increasing number of "latch-key" children who let themselves out of the house before school and back in after school while their parents are away at work. To avoid the potential risks faced by these children, school boards and other agencies need to pool their resources to provide supervised activities at the school both before and after regular hours. These could include enrichment activities in the arts, sports, supervised study, informal play. Although the school is a natural location for these activities, teachers do not necessarily have to be involved in them.

Extending the school day for this purpose raises the issue of differentiated staffing and its implications, and the possibility of introducing greater flexibility into school hours to encourage desirable trends, such as closer relationships with home and community. Some teachers, for example, may find it beneficial to visit parents at their home in the evening to discuss their children's progress, particularly in cases where parents are unable to come to the school. It might therefore be timely to consider permitting school staff members sufficient flexibility in working hours to allow for innovative kinds of educational activities.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

30. THAT the Ministry of Education in cooperation with school boards, teachers' associations, and community and government agencies develop criteria for the establishment and funding of supervised "extended day" programs for young children both before and after school, and that the possibilities of differentiated staffing and the

introduction of more flexibility into the teacher's working day be explored.

8.9 Use of School Space for Services to Families with Young Children

Current legislation appears to many Project respondents to encourage school boards to close schools rather than explore alternative uses for them. For example, Ministry of Education Memorandum 1981:B2-8 requires school boards with surplus schools to offer them for sale or lease to a preferred list of agencies. This requirement places limits on the options available to community agencies seeking accommodation in a school.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

31. THAT the Minister of Education and school boards adjust existing policies related to school closures and use of school space in order to facilitate the provision of educational support services for families and young children in neighborhood schools.

8.10 Advisory Committee for Primary Education

The extension of responsibility for young children from family and school to the community at large suggests the need for a broadly-based committee to assist the school and to ensure coordination of services. Such a committee could be assigned the following tasks:

- to monitor the needs of young children and their parents regarding programs and services;

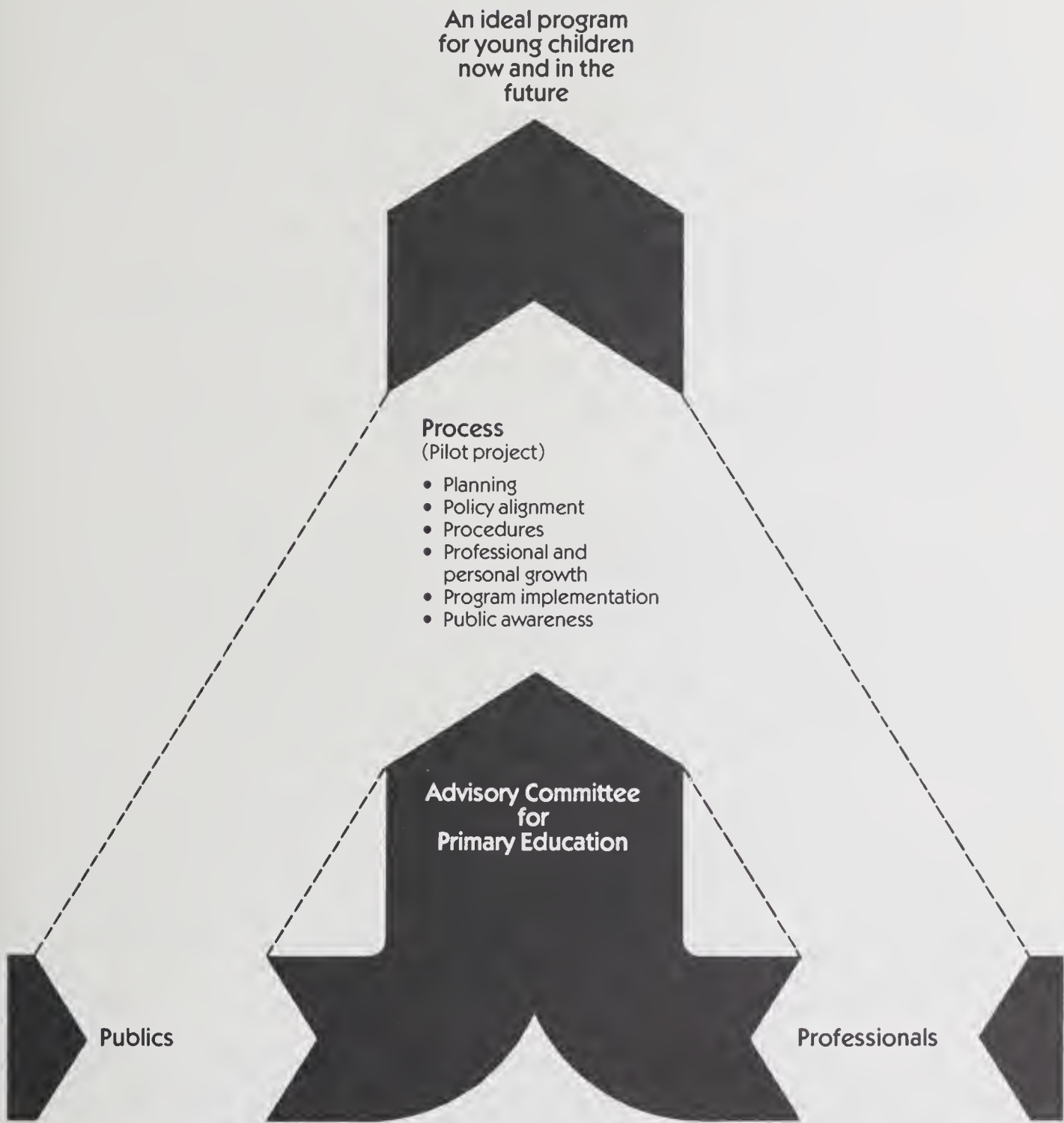
- to assist in the planning and implementation of communication strategies to inform parents of young children about the availability of programs and services;
- to advise on the planning of programs and services;
- to maintain awareness of provincial/national developments regarding provisions for young children in order to share informed advice.

The central role of the advisory committee is shown in the diagram "Partnerships in Process," which depicts the process leading to the establishment of high-quality programs for young children. Parents and members of the public will collaborate with professional educators and other service-providers in this process.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

32. THAT the Ministry of Education require every school board to establish an advisory committee or some other mechanism to make recommendations to the board on matters affecting the development and delivery of programs and services for primary age children.

Partnerships in Process



9. A PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In providing high-quality education for young children, the Ministry of Education has two functions. One function is a facilitating task, namely, to indicate a direction and to create a climate for discussion about how to reach goals and expectations in the educational process. A second function is a coordinating and implementing one which ensures that resources and policies are brought together to serve families and to enhance the abilities of parents to take a major role in the education of their young children.

The Ministry of Education in cooperation with school boards has developed and validated the Curriculum, Review, Development and Implementation (CRDI) model to provide an effective procedure to ensure that curriculum and policy are implemented.

Discussions, briefs and submissions received by the Early Primary Education Project stressed the need for a vigorous initiative by the government and others responsible for the education of young children to inform the public, administrators, trustees and others about all matters affecting the educability of young children.

A basic concern was expressed about the lack of knowledge and understanding about the value of quality care and education for young children and the need for additional support services for families to enable them to continue to provide for their children.

The Ministry of Education must provide guidelines and policies with enough flexibility to allow for change and response to the evolving needs of children, families and communities. The Ministry recognizes that local initiatives must be supported and encouraged and that there is a need to establish priority policies for the effective use of

resources to assist such groups as single parents, immigrants, etc.

Effective implementation of program is a cooperative partnership and is dependent upon such factors as people, resources, policies and an action plan or process. The Ministry of Education must ensure that all those involved in education - in every sense of the word - of young children reinforce and support one another, rather than provide a fragmented and unplanned series of educational programs and services. Cooperative planning and creativity in problem-solving are two of society's most important resources and must be used in implementing policy recommendations.

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

33. THAT the Ministry of Education, on the basis of the report of the Early Primary Education Project, release to school boards and the community at large a statement indicating the direction that the early years of the Ontario education system will take over the next five years, and the implications of this direction for the other parts of the system.
34. THAT the Ministry of Education, following review, development, and implementation procedures, prepare a plan which will facilitate the implementation of initiatives undertaken as a result of the Early Primary Education Project.
35. THAT the Ministry of Education establish a branch in its organization to provide the strong provincial leadership and

support required to attain the aims of the Project.

36. THAT a team of enablers be appointed and placed in regional offices to work with school boards, faculties of education, CAATs, community and parent organizations, and others to provide support and leadership at the regional level.
37. THAT school boards in representative areas across the province be identified as pilot boards to assist in developing a guide for school board work plans, in determining financial and other resource requirements, and in identifying areas where Ministry policies, programs and services require adjustment.
38. THAT within one year of the pilot boards' completion of these tasks, all school boards be required to submit to the Ministry of Education work plans which identify priorities and describe actions to be taken over the next five years to provide high-quality programs in the early years.
39. THAT the Ministry of Education pilot and fund at least two Teacher Education Centres during the first year of implementation, one in English and one in French.
40. THAT the Ministry of Education adjust General Legislative Grants and consider the provision of Incentive Grants to

assist school boards to implement the approved Project recommendations.

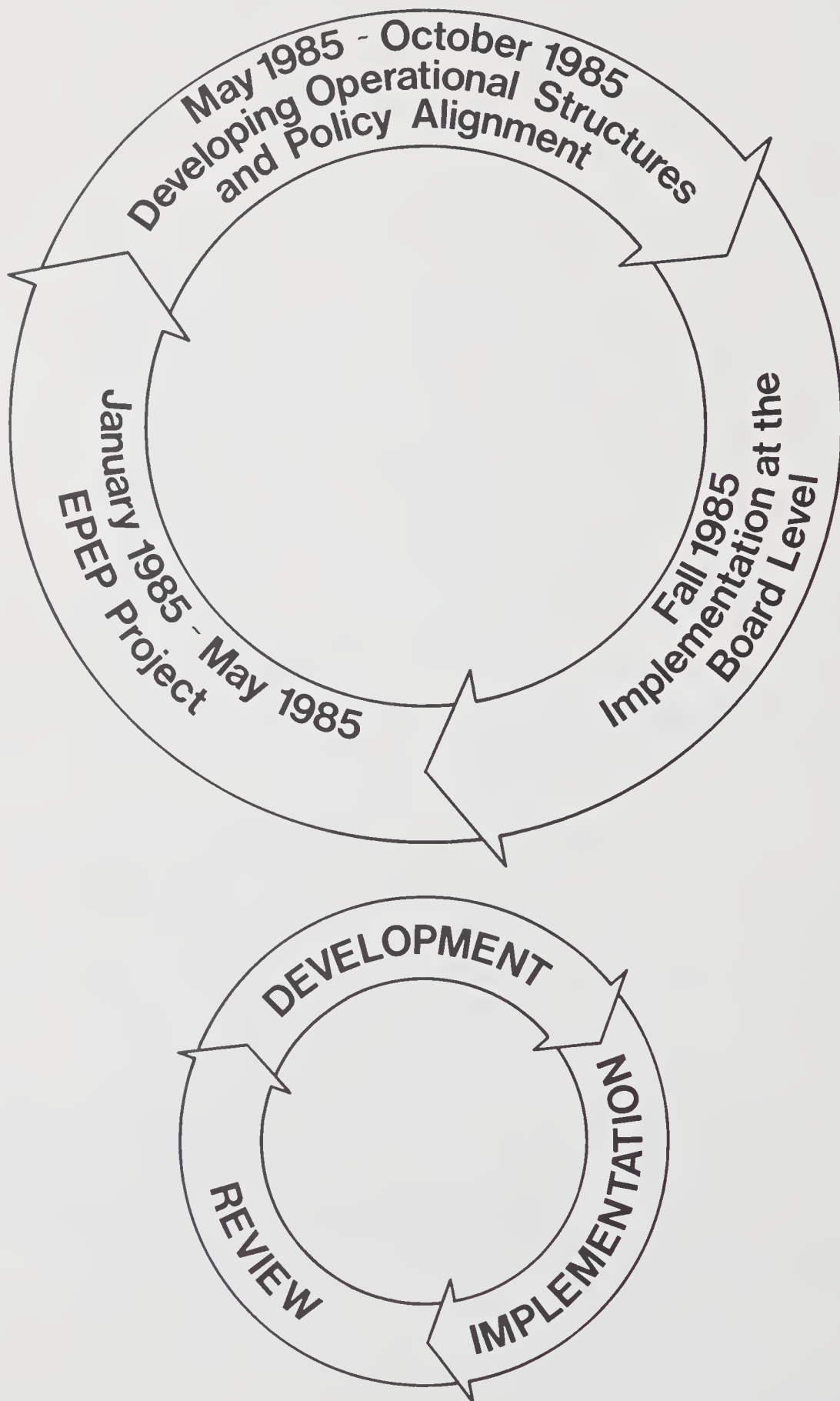
41. THAT the Ministry of Education in cooperation with school boards, schools, and educational associations, launch a public awareness campaign to make all who deal with families and young children more aware of the objectives and methods of education in the early primary years.
42. THAT the Ministry of Education follow up the release of the Early Primary Education Project Report with a monthly, community-focussed newsletter (12-18 months' duration) that would serve as a clearing-house of information on innovative early childhood education projects across Ontario, funding sources, multi-agency cooperative ventures, and other relevant topics.

The following graphics illustrate a schedule of implementation and the CRDI cycle as it relates to the Early Primary Education Project.

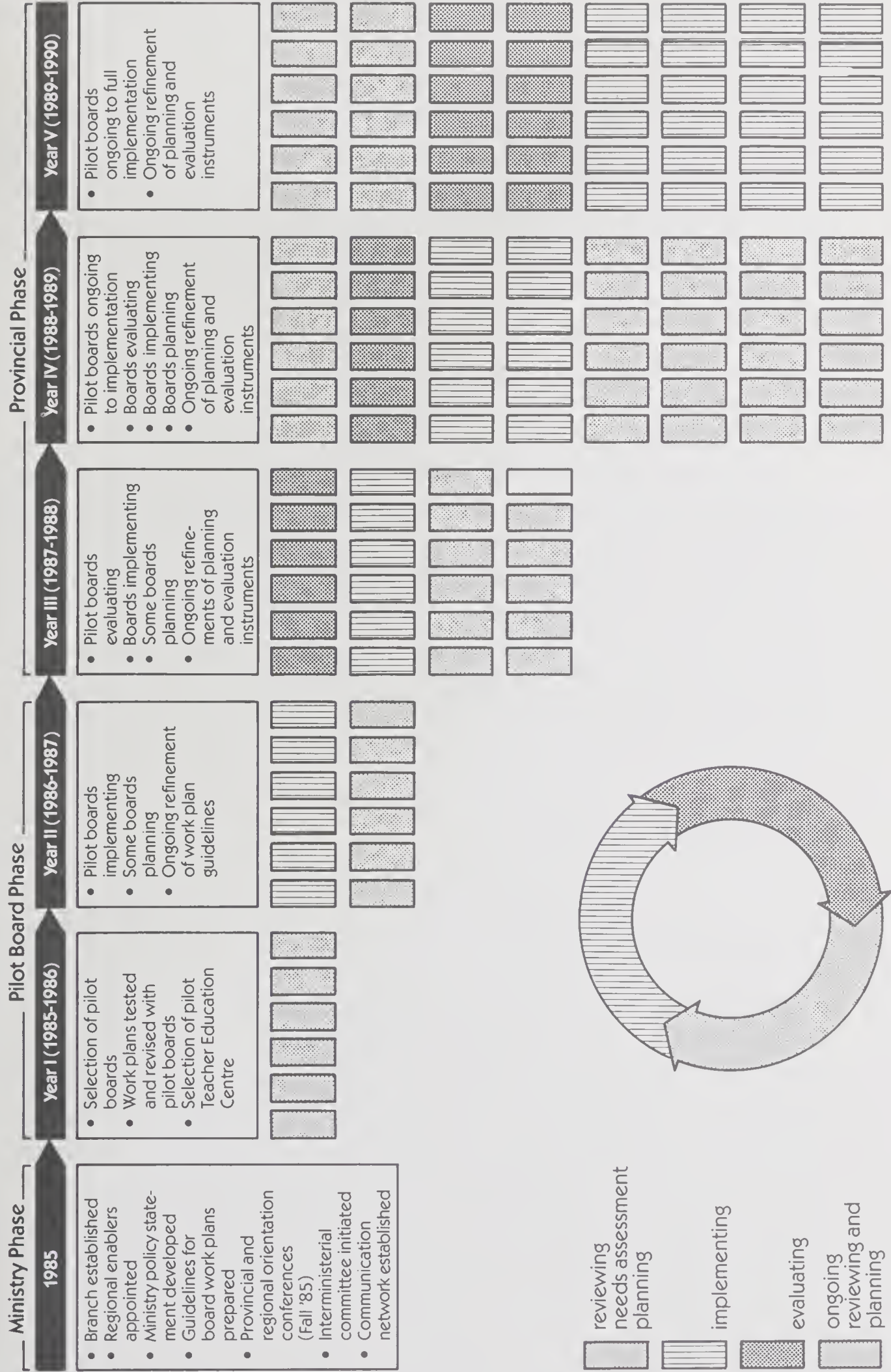
In the graphic of the "CRDI model", the Early Primary Education Project provides the review phase; the development phase is reflected in the development of operational structures and policy alignments; and the pilot board phase initiates implementation.

The graphic "Schedule of Implementation" suggests three phases: Ministry phase (1985), pilot board phase (1985-87) and a provincial phase (1988-90), with components such as planning, implementing, evaluating and ongoing reviewing.

EPEP as it Relates to the Review, Development, and Implementation Cycle



Schedule of Implementation



10. OTHER ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION

A number of issues that arose during the course of the Project were considered outside its scope, and hence no recommendations were made to deal with them. Since these issues require attention, they will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministry officials for further consideration. The following were the additional issues identified:

10.1 French Immersion Programs

Issues requiring attention include access, transportation, curriculum guidelines and materials, optimum time for the beginning of reading, and the structuring of activities. In particular, concerns have been expressed about the lack of consistency between French Immersion classroom practices and the philosophy of The Formative Years, and about the need for Immersion teachers in the Primary Division to hold Primary Education qualifications.

10.2 Private Schools

The responsibility for children aged 2 to 4 attending private schools but not covered by the provisions of the Day Nurseries Act has not been clearly established. At present, Ontario has a significant number of private schools that have a very small enrolment of children of compulsory school age but a very large enrolment of younger children. The Ministry of Education estimates that the number of children aged 2 to 4 in these schools is between 2,000 and 3,000. An exemption in the Day Nurseries Act removes these children from coverage under the Act, and at the same time the Ministry of Education does not regularly inspect elementary private schools.

10.3 Ministry of the Child

This concept was proposed in the report To Herald A Child and continues to be supported by some organizations. Such a ministry would provide policy direction and assistance to school boards, community agencies, daycare centres and other institutions which have responsibility for the care, development and education of the young child.

10.4 Delivery of Services to Remote and Rural Areas

Further study is required of the possibility of more innovative and efficient delivery systems to provide educational services to the more remote and rural areas of the province. A number of people who responded to the Project expressed concern about the bussing of young children, particularly over long distances.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PRIMARY DIVISION to be used as the basis for the development of a curriculum policy

June, 1984

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS FOR PRIMARY CHILDREN

The fostering of the child's independence and love of learning should be the ongoing aim of education in the Primary years. To achieve this aim, the following conditions must be met:

- Co-operation must be encouraged and maintained between the teacher and the child, the child and his/her parents, and the teacher and the child's parents. Education specialists may be added to this co-operative team as needed.
- The program must capitalize on the child's natural way of learning through play. A rich environment that offers continuous opportunities for choice and decision making should be provided. In this way, the child will be able to choose his/her own intellectual, social, and physical challenges.
- The teacher must observe the child's activities and use of language during play. These observations will enable the teacher to plan with the child activities that will further the child's development and to interact with the child, through the use of questions, comments and suggestions for changes in the learning environment, in order to stimulate the child's thinking. Meaningful teacher-pupil interaction and satisfying learning activities will foster the child's acquisition of understandings and skills that are appropriate to his/her interests, needs, and talents.
- The child must be involved in an integrated program that capitalizes on his/her natural curiosity and that promotes the development of inquiry learning. The teacher's interaction with the child should encourage the child to develop thinking, predicting, researching, and analysing, skills and to make independent decisions regarding his/her social, intellectual, and physical development. As well, the knowledge and skills of different subject areas should become part of the real-life problems that the child encounters both inside and outside of the classroom.

This aim and the conditions essential to its achievement must be kept in mind during the implementation of the following overall objectives and expectations for Primary education programs.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES	EXPECTATIONS
The program will foster and extend in the child:	The child will be provided with the time and opportunity to:
-- communication skills;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- feel secure while sharing ideas and feelings in a receptive atmosphere in which communication is valued; -- extend his/her thinking ability to learning through communication in a variety of receptive and expressive modes, using media such as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) oral language (i.e., listening and talking to peers and adults); b) dramatization, movement, and music; c) art (i.e., modelling and painting); d) written language (i.e., writing and reading); e) graphs and charts; -- express his/her thoughts for a variety of reasons; -- select from and use many different writing tools, props, and media that are appropriate to his/her individual interests, talents and needs;

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES	EXPECTATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- organizational skills that will enable him/her to recognize relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- interact with others within an environment that allows his/her own activities; -- find meaning and pattern in the world by comparing, classifying, reclassifying, and reordering materials and events; -- discover various ways of organizing collections of objects, pictures, and symbols to establish relationships;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- observation skills through the use of all of the senses; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- manipulate and observe a variety of natural (e.g., sand, water, clay, leaves, bones, rocks) and manufactured (e.g. blocks, toys, utensils, clothing, books, climbers) materials, both individually and in combination, in activities that involve the senses; -- discover the characteristics of objects, symbols, and events; -- explore the environment, both inside and outside of the classroom;

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES	EXPECTATIONS
-- social skills;	-- participate in a wide variety of social-learning situations in which he/she may assume a variety of roles (e.g., leader, follower, facilitator); develop a variety of skills for working with others (e.g., sharing materials, space, and ideas); think about actions and ideas and predict the consequences of his/her involvement in them; decide on courses of action; communicate his/her thoughts and feelings; evaluate the way in which he/she has participated and become involved;
-- a feeling of well-being, security, and self-confidence;	-- examine and communicate the predicted consequences of his/her planned involvement in a social situation; -- feel secure in a co-operative atmosphere that includes the teacher, peers, parents, and other educators; -- become involved with people, things, and events in an environment that encourages and supports risk taking; -- develop social skills (e.g., the ability to discuss matters and to co-operate with others) by actively participating in his/her learning, on an individual basis or as a participant with peers in small or large groups; -- acquire knowledge and cognitive and physical skills by choosing from a wide range of activities appropriate to his/her level of development, interests, and talents; -- learn to deal with conflict when it arises in the natural interaction of children;

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES	EXPECTATIONS
-- the development of gross-motor abilities	-- participate in meaningful physical experiences, involving running, jumping, skipping, walking, and climbing; -- become involved in a variety of spaces (e.g., the classroom, gymnasium, playground); -- use a variety of large-muscle equipment (e.g., climbers, large balls, hoops, ropes, jungle gym);
-- the development of fine-motor abilities;	-- participate in meaningful physical experiences involving eye-hand co-ordination; -- become actively involved in a variety of spaces, both indoors and outdoors; -- use a variety of small-muscle equipment (e.g. paintbrushes, crayons, pencils, scissors, felt pens, sand, water, blocks, containers, eating utensils);
-- the ability to solve problems in everyday life;	-- choose from a variety of materials, activities, people, and spaces in order to discover challenges related to his/her own needs and interests; -- begin to develop the following inquiry skills: a) <u>exploring</u> . This involves observing, classifying, seriating, and corresponding many motivating, challenging materials and events that stimulate a sense of curiosity; b) <u>inquiring</u> . This involves asking relevant questions in order to begin to identify and clarify problems;

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES	EXPECTATIONS
	c) <u>predicting possibilities</u> . This involves suggesting a range of alternate answers or solutions to a question or problem.
	d) <u>planning and collecting</u> . This involves (i) using or suggesting an appropriate organizer for recording information and (ii) gathering information from a variety of sources -- materials (concrete, pictorial, symbolic/abstract), people, and experiences -- both inside and outside of the classroom;
	e) <u>deciding</u> . This involves forming reasonable conclusions on the basis of organized information;
	f) <u>communicating</u> . This involves choosing from a variety of ways the method best suited to express a decision;
	g) <u>evaluating</u> . This involves co-operating with the teachers or peers to evaluate what the child has gained from the inquiry process;

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES	EXPECTATIONS
-- a respect for self and others;	-- become involved in a classroom and school community that fosters self-confidence and concern for others; -- understand his/her own strengths, interests, and needs as a basis for understanding that others also have particular strengths, interests, and needs; -- develop a respect for adults through his/her interaction with the caring adults involved in the supportive learning environment provided by the school; -- acquire knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts and situations by working either on an individual basis or in co-operation with others; -- begin to understand the points of view of his/her peers through participation in learning activities that involve working with groups of various sizes;
-- a positive and appropriate sense of community	-- become involved in situations in which he/she is encouraged to balance personal desires with the responsibility to a group; -- actively participate in the classroom in order to develop an awareness of his/her role in community life (e.g., the school, neighbourhood); -- make choices and act on the basis of them;

OVERALL OBJECTIVES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

OVERALL OBJECTIVES	EXPECTATIONS
-- a sense of curiosity;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- use all of the senses to explore a variety of motivating, challenging materials, strategies, and experiences that create a sense of wonder and that may be changed to meet individual interests and needs; -- work in an environment that is flexibly organized in terms of time and space and make choices from a wide range of materials chosen from all of the following levels of difficulty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) concrete, including natural (e.g., sand, water, plants) and manufactured (e.g., toys, blocks, paint) materials; b) pictorial (e.g., photographs, books, films, TV programs); c) symbolic/abstract (e.g., spoken and printed words, numerals, graphs, charts);
-- creativity and the use of his/her imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- ask questions, identify problems, and investigate possible solutions; -- become involved with accepting and challenging people and take part in rich and varied experiences involving literature, visual arts, music, drama, and dance; -- develop an appreciation of the arts through sensory experiences; -- choose from a variety of materials that permit open-ended responses.

APPENDIX B:EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES
FOR LINKING SERVICES

In recognition of the importance of a stable, healthy family life, many people across Ontario have developed innovative strategies to link services to support families with young children. The examples described below provide a sense of the range and variety of linking activities possible.

1. ORIENTATION AND INTEGRATION OF NEWCOMERS

The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture facilitates the settlement and integration of newcomers through the provision of transfer payments, consultation, training and program development to community-based organizations, school boards and community colleges. These sponsoring agencies offer language programs using a variety of approaches, such as parent and preschool, citizenship preparation/ESL, one-to-one tutoring, FSL, and English in the Workplace.

For language programs, agencies apply for grants which can be used for salaries of preschool teachers and coordination and operating expenses. In addition to grants for language and orientation programs are grants for newcomer integration. Funds are provided on a project basis for a maximum of three years to assist community non-profit organizations and public institutions define newcomer needs and develop innovative projects that will help meet them. Eligible organizations include municipalities and school boards. Other providers include community colleges, libraries, YM/YWCA, churches, recreation centres, community committees, community volunteers.

2. FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES

The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) provides financial assistance to answer family needs identified by the community. One outcome has been the evolution of what are variously called family resource, parent/child or parenting program centres. Users include infants and preschoolers, parents, grandparents, older siblings, home-care providers, and some school-aged children. While major funding is supplied by the Ministry, funds also come from federal government grants, school boards, local businesses, private donations, and membership fees. School boards and churches provide services in kind. These resources are combined to form centres unique to the community from which they have evolved.

Some typical services and activities include: drop-in centre for isolated parents and children; access to equipment, toys, arts materials; toy and book lending library; adult education for parents, e.g. parenting skills, child development, information on referral services and community resources, discussion groups and seminars on child care, nutrition, time management, education issues, safety, budgeting and housing.

The Centres also offer clothing and equipment exchanges; workshops for parents and children together, infant stimulation, uses of toys and books; rehabilitation services for disabled parents and children; translation services; and liaison with care and treatment facilities.

Family resource centres have been initiated by school board staff members (principal, social worker, community worker), field staff of Community and Social Services or agencies within the community, such as churches. Centres are located in operating schools, in vacant school space, in commercial buildings, or in community buildings, e.g. churches, recreation centres. One

example is the Syme Family Centre in Toronto, a venture of the school board and health and social agencies. Its creation was the result of an inter-agency committee responding to a community need - - isolation of some parents and children. Funds from MCSS (Day Care Initiatives) contributed to maintenance of the centre; space, equipment and supplies are provided by the school board. Parents and children are referred to the centre by other agencies, and referred to other agencies such as Public Health by the centre when necessary.

The centre keeps a registry for parents seeking or wishing to provide home daycare. A Guide to Home Care for Parents and Caregivers, published by The West End Child Care Project, is made available to parents/caregivers.

3. COMMUNITY INFORMATION BUREAU

Community Information Fairview is an information centre serving the community bounded by Lawrence, Victoria Park, Steeles and Bayview Avenue in North York. It is located in Fairview Mall and has over the years been supported by the Fairview Mall Merchants' Association through donation of space for a booth, payment for utilities, and a phone line. Volunteers raise about half the operating costs through garage sales, solicitation of funds from corporations, and an annual Christmas gift-wrapping booth at the Mall. The centre now has a new kiosk. It has received a grant of \$4200 for operational costs from the City of North York, and one of \$8500 from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. The service is staffed by volunteers who respond to inquiries about transportation, education, children's services, health, recreation, legal services, housing, home services for the elderly, immigration, employment, taxes, etc. The service is limited to referral to other agencies to enable people with a problem or question to reach those able to help them.

4. PROGRAM FOR NATIVE CHILDREN

Another linking activity is a home-based program for Native children on the Walpole Island Reserve in Southern Ontario. Initiated in 1982, the program is for infants from birth to age two, their parents, and other family members. Special attention is paid to teenaged mothers and children viewed as at risk. The program is staffed by two professional workers trained to work with Native people. They make home visits, supervise a weekly "Young Moms" support group, operate a toy and book lending library, provide monthly group activities, and operate a baby-clothing and equipment exchange.

5. MUSIC FOR CHILDREN

Five North York libraries offer "Music for Children", a program for children 2 to 5 that responds to their needs for musical involvement. By learning folk songs and rhymes, they experience beat, timing, patterns and qualities of sound.

6. COMMUNITY PROJECTS SPONSORED BY NORTH YORK BOARD OF EDUCATION

The North York Board of Education operates the following community projects, among others:

6.1 Before and After School Programs, operated jointly by North York Parks and Recreation and the Board, is located primarily in high-need areas in space provided free by the Board. The cost of approximately \$100,000 is shared equally. The Program was offered at some 35 locations in 1984.

- 6.2 HEDS is a head-start program for high-risk three-year-olds. It is jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Dellcrest Centre, and Seneca College. The school board provides free space as available.
- 6.3 Family Studies Centres have been established at five locations as part of the Family Studies program. Priority is given to Family Studies students with children, children of staff and of community members. The centres are open to children aged 2 to 4.
- 6.4 Parent and Pre-School Program is operated under Continuing Education. Two classes of one-half day each are offered each week. They provide a parent training program attended by both parents and children. A fee of \$19.00 a week is charged for one child; the fee for each additional child is \$7.00.

7. STUDY OF CHILD-CARE NEEDS AND SERVICES IN NORTH YORK

In January 1983, a project to study child-care services and needs in North York was co-sponsored by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the North York Board of Education, the North York Inter-Agency Council, and the Ontario Community Education Centre. A major factor in the sponsorship by the North York Board was the opportunity to collect data that could be used to determine what role, if any, the Board should take in the area of child care.

A subsequent staff review of the completed report recommended that the North York Board of Education provide consultation and co-ordination support to school-related community groups to

strengthen community ownership of child-care programs in schools; co-ordinate child care activities associated with the Board; organize parent education programs; and encourage the development of an integrated approach to curriculum for four- and five- year olds.

The review also proposed that the immediate priorities for Board support to communities include encouraging the expansion of school-age child care (4-12 years); working with community groups, government, and appropriate agencies and institutions to encourage the development of care centres for infants of students who attend North York Board day school programs; and working with community groups, agencies and institutions to develop co-operative models of preschool centres in secondary schools.

Finally, the review recommended that the Board continue to support the Child Care Co-ordinating Committee, Children's Services Committee of the North York Inter-Agency Council, in its efforts to develop a co-ordinated child care system in North York; and co-operate with all levels of government, agencies and institutions in the development of a long-term funding strategy for community-operated child-care services in schools.

8. ESTABLISHMENT OF DAYCARE CENTRES IN SENIOR CITIZENS' HOMES

An Intergenerational Program sponsored by the Regional Municipality of Niagara started several years ago at Dorchester Manor, a senior citizens' home in Niagara Falls. Residents who wished to participate were transported to a local school to serve as teachers' aides. The seniors became involved with the students in various ways, including tutoring exceptional children and singing in an intergenerational choir. This program has changed as

the profile of the residents has changed; today, fifteen students come into the Manor weekly for tutoring on a one-to-one basis. Other residents have served as resource people for courses at Niagara College and Brock University.

9. RECREATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

The Ministry of Tourism and Recreation provides grants for program development and capital building projects for recreation provided by municipalities which, in turn, provide recreation services and programs to children. The Ministry provides consultation services, financial assistance and resources for the design of children's play spaces, consultation and resources for those who work with children with disabilities in recreational settings, and leadership and outdoor recreation skill development for teachers and summer camp leaders.

10. INFANT/PARENT LEARNING PROGRAM

An Infant/Parent Learning Program operates at the Toronto General Hospital under the sponsorship of the Childbirth Education Association and the Institute for Child Study. The Program teaches parents to recognize the value of play and to use it to teach their children about themselves and the world around them. The four-month, eight-session courses also give parents a chance to be with other parents and learn from each other's experiences.

APPENDIX CThe Advisory Committee

Ms. Beverly Alldrick
Secretariat for Social Development,
Toronto

Mrs. Mary Amyott,
Ontario School Trustees' Council,
Peterborough

Ms. Roberta Bessette
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association,
Windsor

Mrs. Claudette Boyer
L'association française des conseils scolaires
de l'Ontario,
Ottawa.

Mr. Don Brown
Ontario Public School Teachers'
Federation,
Ottawa.

Mr. John Chiarelli
Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers'
Association,
Kitchener.

Mr. Courval Courchesne
Association des surintendants franco-ontariens,
Ottawa.

Mrs. Margaret Deeth
Canadian Association for Young Children,
Toronto

Mr. Des Dixon
Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation,
Toronto

Sister Pat Donovan
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association,
North Bay

Dr. Isabel Doxey
Ryerson Polytechnical Institute,
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Mr. Robert Fera
Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher
Association of Ontario,
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Mrs. Anne Gagne
Association des enseignants franco-ontariens,
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Mr. John Giancarlo
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Welland

Mrs. Sandra Goldstein
Association of Large School Boards in Ontario,
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Ms. Patricia Hileman
Association of Early Childhood Education, Ontario,
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Dr. Wilfred Innerd
Faculty of Education, University of Windsor,
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Dr. John MacDonald
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Mrs. Norma McGuire
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Mrs. Irene Neal
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Mrs. Celeste Pelliccione
Ontario Separate School Trustees' Association,
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Mrs. Muriel Schwartz
Newcomer Services Branch, Ministry
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Ms. Adele Scott-Anthony
Operational Support Branch, Ministry of
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Mrs. Frances Sowards
Northern Ontario School Trustees' Association,
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Mrs. Jennie Steeves
Ontario Association of Education
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Ms. Diana Tomlinson
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Associations of Ontario,
Toronto

Ms. Margaret Twomey, Chairperson of the Committee
Lake Superior Board of Education,
Schreiber

Ms. Fran Watson
Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation,
Downsview

Mr. George Willett
Ontario Principals' Association,
Hamilton

APPENDIX DThe Steering Committee

Mr. Elmo Ciprietti - Communications Branch,
Ministry of Education

Mr. Henk Demeris - Planning and Development Branch,
Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

Ms. Leslie Lewis - Research and Information Branch,
Ministry of Education.

Mr. Lorne MacKenzie - Planning and Development Branch,
Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Ms. Sylvia McPhee - Special Education Branch,
Ministry of Education

Ms. Fran Moscall - Curriculum Branch,
Ministry of Education

Mr. Robert Sheridan - University Relations Branch,
Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Ministry Regional Office Coordinators

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